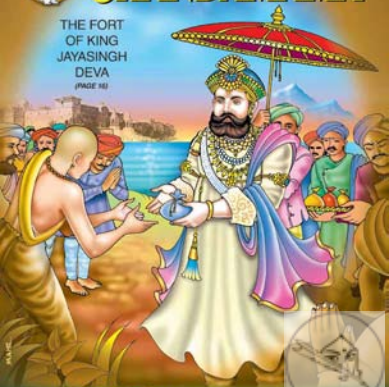




OCTOBER 2004 Rs. 15/-

# CHANDAMAMA

THE FORT  
OF KING  
JAYASINGH  
DEVA  
(PAGE 18)



KALEIDOSCOPE (WRITINGS OF CHILDREN UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE)



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is one of the oldest in the world.  
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wonders**  
yet?



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*This is the last of the Nutrine - Chandamama Olympic Quiz Contest. You will find the questions interesting and adding to your knowledge of the Games. Choose the correct answers, fill the entry form, and mail this page along with 5 wrappers of Nutrine Chocolate Eclairs before the closing date to Nutrine Chandamama Contest, Chandamama India Limited, 82, Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.*

*This is an all India contest. The prizes are 3 Konica cameras, 10 Calculators, and 50 Nutrine sweet hampers as first, second and third prizes respectively every month. At the end of five monthly contests, the 6th contest offers a Bumper Draw and the winner will get a Personal Computer, in addition to the regular prizes. Participation in all the 6 months alone will entitle the entries for the Bumper Draw. Results of the Bumper draw will be announced in December by post.*

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Study the questions carefully and tick [✓] the correct answer in the blanks provided for each question.

Did you know?



Tug-of-war was introduced in the 1900 Paris Games and it continued to be an event for only five more Games.

- Name the only Olympics event in which India has won eight gold medals so far.  
☐ Weightlifting      ☐ Tennis      ☐ Hockey
- Name the Indian Hockey player, who scored 36 goals in three consecutive Olympics held in 1928, 1932 and 1936.  
☐ Dhanraj Pillai      ☐ Milkha Singh      ☐ Dhyan Chand
- Name the Indian woman, who won a bronze medal in weightlifting at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.  
☐ Kunjurani Devi      ☐ Karnam Malleswari      ☐ Shiny Wilson
- Who holds the world record in the Olympic Women's Discus Throw?  
☐ Martina Hellmann      ☐ Ilona Slupianek      ☐ Trine Hattestad
- Track down all the 'Y's in the Nutrine advertisement in this issue. There are:  
☐ 4      ☐ 3      ☐ 2

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Name: .....

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India's largest selling sweets and toffees.





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# CATCH THEM NOW



History was created when Maj. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore won a silver medal at the Athens Games. It was the first ever individual Olympic silver medal coming to India ever since the Modern Games began 108 years ago. The country rose as one man to hail the ace shooter as its hero of the moment.

There have been a handful of individual Olympic bronzes in our kitty, not to speak of the string of gold medals we won in hockey—a team event. However, in recent times we have not been able to maintain our supremacy in that event.

It is not the time to do any post-mortem of India's dismal performance at Athens. The imperative need is to think of the future and how the standards of our young and promising sportsmen and women can be raised to reach a state of reckoning vis-a-vis world ratings.

India is not lacking in sports academies which give only specialised training and do not offer general education. In the present scenario, these academies have also to facilitate degree qualification and job opportunities. Failing which training in sports will have only secondary importance.

Here we necessarily have to think of the role of parents. Instances are many when champions have attributed their victory to, among others, their parents. It is the duty of the parents to watch for or ascertain the aptitude shown by children or the talents they exhibit early in life and then encourage them to improve their skills through training wherever and whenever such facilities are available.

It is not just sporting spirit that we are talking about. The overall well-being of children is very important. They must have clean habits, they must maintain good health and they must cultivate the fighting spirit to take on challenges in the sports arena.

We regret to mention the lack of team spirit and want of national pride, which could be some of the reasons for India lagging behind, despite the large youth power our country commands. National pride is not sporting the tri-colour on one's face, whether he or she is a player or the cheerleaders in the galleries. India has organised Asian Games thrice; the country is to hold the Commonwealth Games in 2010. If our prospective athletes have to bring glory to the country, we have to "catch 'em now" or it will be never.

Visit us at : <http://www.chandamama.org>

Democracy consists of choosing your dictators,  
after they've told you what you think it is you want to hear.

—Alan Coren

Martyrs do not build churches: they are the mortar, or the alibi.

They are followed by the priests and bigots.

—Albert Camus

Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

You cannot simultaneously prepare for and prevent war.

—Albert Einstein





## BIRTH OF A MAGAZINE FOR TRIBAL CHILDREN



*Chandamama* reached a new milestone in its 57 years' existence in the world of publishing, with the launching of *Chandomamo* in Santali language.

**Chandomamo** is the first ever children's magazine in a tribal language, fully illustrated and in multi-colour. It is printed in Olchiki script developed by Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu.

The inaugural issue was formally released on August 15, 2004 at Bhubaneswar by the Chief Minister of Orissa, Shri Naveen Patnaik, who was kind enough to bless our new venture and compliment us for taking up a noble cause. We are beholden to him.

The Santali edition has been made possible with the assistance and cooperation of the Santali Chandomamo Committee headed by Smt. Draupadi Murmu, MLA, as Chairperson. We are greatly indebted to the committee. To mark the occasion, the committee organised a tree planting ceremony at the Thakar Bapa Adibasi Hostel, where several sal saplings were planted.

We also record our gratitude to the print and electronic media for the wide coverage given to the birth of this unique children's magazine.

*Publisher*





# A change of heart

**I**t was a dark, moonless night. Only occasional flashes of lightning lit up the sombre scene and caused an eerie dance of jerky and frightening shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally the silence was broken by the unearthly howling of jackals and laughter of evil spirits.

But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram.

Once again he made his way to the ancient gnarled tree where the corpse was hanging. A skull crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy. Unperturbed, he reached the tree and brought down the corpse. Slinging it across his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, “O King! Your dedication and commitment to your purpose are indeed amazing. I wish all are like you. But I fear you may meet with failure.

Haven’t you heard the story of Dharmangada, who gave up a prized triumph just when it was within his grasp after much toil?” The vampire then narrated the story.

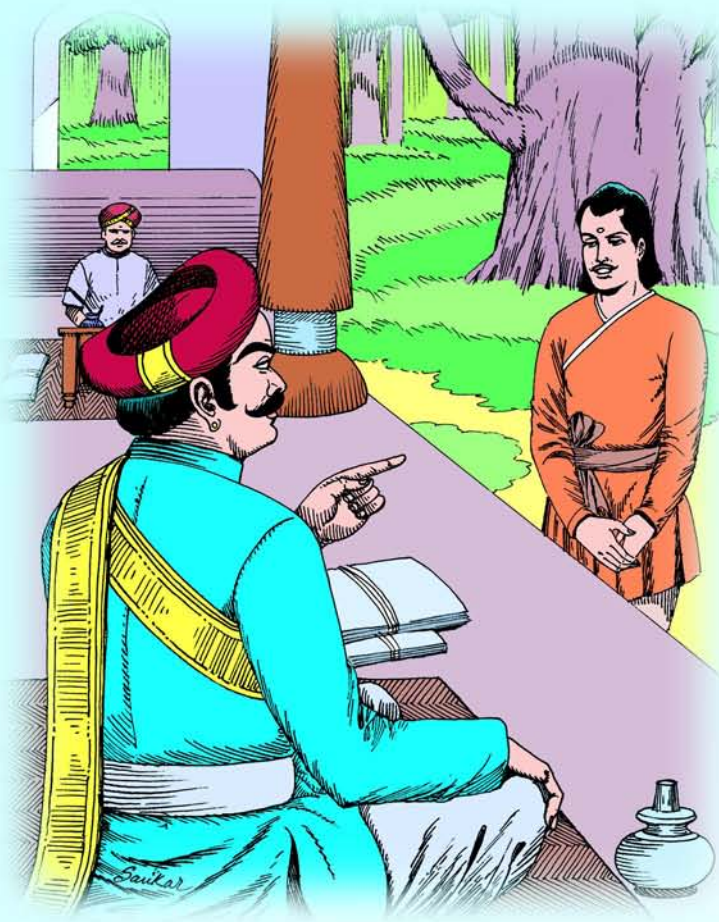
Dharmangada and Vishwadutta were close friends right from childhood. But their friendship received a severe jolt, thanks to the machinations of the village moneylender, Bhushan.

Bhushan was a wicked man who specialised in forging promissory notes to suit his ends. He prepared some fake records to the effect that Dharmangada had borrowed three thousand gold coins from him, pledging his farmland. Then he approached Dharmangada and ordered him to repay the loan, failing which, he threatened, he would seize his farmland!

Aghast over this blatant falsehood, Dharmangada promptly approached the court for justice. He was informed that for the trial to start, he would have to first deposit a thousand gold coins with the court as surety.







Although Dharmangada did not have the money, he was not worried. He had a sound reputation in the village and was sure that someone would help him out by lending him the money. But by then, the news of his misfortune had spread. No one was ready to give him a loan, for, in the event of his losing his farmland, how would he repay the loan? Dharmangada still believed that all was not lost. He had great faith in his friend Vishwadutta and he was sure that he would not fail him.

Unfortunately, Vishwadutta was just then going through a bad time. His father had fallen ill, and a lot of money was required for his treatment. Further, it was at this juncture that his sister's wedding was fixed. He calculated that he would need five thousand gold coins to tide over all the expenses. As he sat wondering where he could get the money, Bhushan approached him and offered to lend him the money, on one condition. He should not go to the help of his friend, Dharmangada!

For Vishwadutta at that moment of crisis, the money was more important than the bond of friendship he shared

with Dharmangada. So he agreed to the condition and took the money. As no one else was ready to lend Dharmangada the surety amount, he forfeited his land to the rapacious Bhushan.

Although Bhushan had done him such a great injustice, strangely Dharmangada's ire was directed not against him but against Vishwadutta, the friend who had let him down at a crucial moment. He was so furious with Vishwadutta that he even contemplated doing away with him. But then, better sense prevailed and he decided against it.

All his time was now spent in planning a suitable way to avenge himself on Vishwadutta. Soon he heard of a holy man with miraculous powers who was camping on the outskirts of the village. He met him, narrated the sordid tale of his friend's betrayal, and besought his help in taking revenge.

The holy man heard him out and finally said, "Neither of you has really been a good friend to the other. If Vishwadutta refused to help you out of selfish considerations, you too are no better – you are now trying to harm him!"

"It is not so, O great soul!" protested Dharmangada. "Vishwadutta did me grievous harm. I do not wish to cause him harm – all I want is to take revenge on him for his misdeed!"

"At present, your mind is filled with poison, and I have no truck with venomous beings! Go now and return after cleansing your mind of evil emotions, and then I shall help you," declared the sage.

"Try as I might, I'm unable to rid my mind of poisonous thoughts, O holy soul!" confessed Dharmangada. "Can you show me a way to do so?"

"Very well," said the sage and he continued. "I can transform you into a snake. Your vengeful thoughts will then be converted to poison in your fangs. When you get rid of the poison, you will regain your human form. While you are in the snake's form, you will remember your human past, but your intelligence will be that of a snake. But if someone kills you while you are in the snake's form, that will be the end of you; you won't be able to recover your human form." Dharmangada agreed to the condition, and the sage changed him into a snake.





In his new form, Dharmangada crawled away into the fields, where a farmer was breaking clods of earth with a stick. His stick accidentally hit the snake's tail. The snake raised its hood, hissing furiously. But the farmer, who had by then moved away, did not notice it.

Just then, another snake emerged from its hole on hearing the hiss. He said to Dharmangada, "I was afraid you would follow that man and bite him. Remember, if human beings see us, it'll be dangerous for us!"

In conversation with the newcomer, Dharmangada learnt that snakes are supposed to use their venom only for self-defence. They do not nurse any feelings of revenge. If a man did not cause any damage to them that was not life-threatening, they never retaliated.

Although Dharmangada thought that this was the right policy, he could not so easily give up his old grievance against Vishwadutta. This was too good an opportunity to lose – in his new form, he could kill his hated enemy and escape punishment!

Thus thinking, Dharmangada furtively made his way to Vishwadutta's house. Entering a room, he saw Vishwadutta's six year old son sitting alone, playing with his toys.

It struck Dharmangada that this was the perfect chance for revenge – if he bit the child, Vishwadutta would be heart-broken at the loss of his beloved son. Having to live with that grief for the rest of one's life was a worse punishment than losing one's own life! At the same time, Dharmangada's conscience told him that it was sinful to kill an innocent child for a wrong committed by his father.

As he was thus pondering his next move, the little boy's eyes fell on him and he started screaming in terror. Instinctively, Dharmangada turned and glided into the *pooja* room.

Vishwadutta and his family members came running to the spot, alerted by the screams. Learning from the boy that the snake had entered the *pooja* room, they followed and confronted Dharmangada, who stood with his hood raised, ready for attack.

But he was totally unprepared for what followed. Vishwadutta's mother stopped the others from beating him, saying, "This is the *Nagadevata* (Serpent God). He will not harm us. Close your eyes and bow to him.

Let's pray for the end of our troubles, and those of your dear friend Dharmangada, who had to suffer much on account of a wicked man. If we pray sincerely, I'm sure the Nagadevata will respond!" All the family members then closed their eyes in prayer.

Dharmangada stood stunned, unable to believe what he was hearing. His anger and ill-will suddenly vanished, and he found himself drained of his poison.

Of what use is this venom to me? he thought, and struck his fangs against the wall. The next moment, he was transformed back into his original human form. But no one saw him as they were still praying with closed eyes. Dharmangada sneaked into their midst and stood waiting for them to open their eyes.

Moments later, when Vishwadutta opened his eyes, he was astonished to find his old friend, Dharmangada, standing next to him. But before he could speak, Dharmangada said, "My friend, circumstances forced you to pursue a certain course of action, as a result of which I lost my land. But that is no reason for us to give up our intimate friendship!"

The friends embraced, while the mother wept with joy. All those who heard of their reunion praised





Dharmangada. Eventually, the wicked Bhushan, after hearing the story had a change of heart and gave back Dharmangada's property to him.

Having concluded his story, the vampire turned to Vikram and asked, "O King! Vishwadutta proved to be a false friend who refused to help Dharmangada at a crucial moment. Wasn't it to punish him for this treachery that Dharmangada met the sage and changed himself into a snake? All of Dharmangada's bombastic talk about friendship in the *pooja* room is not in character with his actions. Was he not being insincere? Answer me if you can. If you keep quiet, despite knowing the answer, your head shall shatter into a thousand fragments!"

Vikram replied, "Like human beings, animals, too, act according to their nature. Dharmangada had assumed

that snakes would nurse feelings of revenge. But a chance talk with a snake taught him that snakes never kill except in self-defence! He appreciated this reasoning. There is no doubt that Dharmangada and Vishwadutta were close friends. It was natural for Dharmangada to turn to Vishwadutta at a time of need. But Vishwadutta, who was himself passing through a crisis at that time, was unable to extend any help. Dharmangada was unable to comprehend his helplessness and so was bent on revenge. But Vishwadutta's mother's words in the *pooja* room opened his eyes to the truth. Thus the friends were reunited!"

No sooner had King Vikram concluded answering the vampire than the corpse gave him the slip once again. Squaring his shoulders, the king went off in pursuit of it.

## An easy way to get change

A rich, penny-pinching landlord passed a beggar on the street and reached into his pocket. "I'd like to give you a hundred rupees," he said, "but all I have with me is a five hundred rupee note. Take it and give me four hundred rupees change."

"Four hundred rupees! Who has four hundred rupees?" demanded the beggar. "What, am I a banker?"

"All right, don't get fresh. Take five hundred rupees and I shall walk along with you until you beg enough to give me the change."

"That is very generous of you," said the beggar, his voice oozing sarcasm.

"Walk with me, then, and for your kindness, you should stay in good health - at least until you get your four hundred rupees change!"

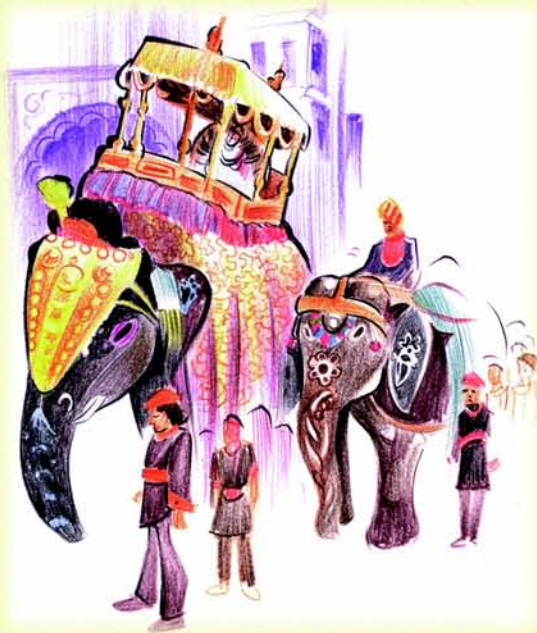






## Dussehra in north and south

If it is Dussehra in the north, it is Dasara in the south, in Mysore to be more specific. Dussehra follows the nine day festival generally called Navratri, when goddess Durga is worshipped, especially in make-shift temples put up in open places. The idols placed in these *puja pandals* depict the goddess annihilating the demon Mahishasura. On the tenth day, these images made of clay or plaster-of-paris are immersed in the sea or in rivers. Dussehra, which marks the victory of Rama over Ravana, offers a spectacle in the north where the burning of tall effigies of Ravana, brother Kumbhakarna, and son Meghnad takes place with great enthusiasm and mirth. In Mysore, Dasara is a 10-day festival, dedicated to goddess Chamundeswari as Durga is called in Karnataka. On Vijaya (victory) dasami (tenth) day, Chamundeswari, who is the royal deity, is taken in procession in a golden *howdah* mounted on an elephant. On another caparisoned elephant sits the Mysore Maharaja on a golden throne placed in a howdah. The long procession of elephants and horses is a grand spectacle watched by thousands of people lining up on either side of the roads.



## Jain gurus and their mounts

Though Vardhamana Mahavira is considered the founder of Jainism, the religion had existed long earlier, as Mahavira was the last Jain guru or *Tirthankara*. There were 23 Jain gurus before him. The sculptures of all the 24 Tirthankaras, strangely, look alike. Then, how could they be distinguished one from the other? All these seated figures are on flat pedestals, each of which has a different mount. The mount of Adinath is an ox; Sumatinath has a bird; Parasvantha has a serpent mount, while Pashupadanatha has a crocodile as his mount. The mount is usually carved in the centre of the pedestal.



From the pen of  
Ruskin Bond

# Mother Hill

**I**t is hard to realize that I've been here all these years—twenty-five summers, monsoons, winters and Himalayan springs. When I look back to the time of my first coming here, it does seem like yesterday.

That probably sums it all up. Time passes, and yet it doesn't pass; people come and go, the mountains remain. Mountains are permanent things. They are stubborn, they refuse to move. You can blast holes out of them for their mineral wealth, strip them of their trees and foliage, or dam their streams and divert their currents. You can make tunnels and roads and bridges; but no matter how hard they try, humans cannot actually get rid of the mountains. That's what I like about them; they are here to stay.

I like to think that I have become a part of these

mountains, this particular range and that by living here for so long, I am able to claim a relationship with the trees, wild flowers, and even the rocks that are an integral part of it.

Yesterday at twilight, when I passed beneath a canopy of oak leaves, I felt that I was a part of the forest. I put out my hand and touched the bark of an old tree, and as I turned away, its leaves brushed against my face as if to acknowledge me.

One day, I thought, if we trouble these great creatures too much, and hack away at them and destroy their young, they will simply uproot themselves and march away, whole forests on the move, over the next range and next, far from the haunts of man. I have seen many forests and green places dwindle and disappear. Now there is an outcry. It is suddenly fashionable to be an environmentalist. That's all right. Perhaps, it is not too late to save the little that is left.

By and large, writers have to stay in the plains to make a living. Hill people have their work cut out trying to wrest a livelihood from their thin, calcinated soil. And as for mountaineers, they climb their peaks and move on in search of other peaks.

But to me, as a writer, mountains have been kind. They were kind right from the beginning, when I left a job in Delhi and rented a small cottage on the outskirts of the hill-station. Today, most hill-stations are rich men's playgrounds, but years ago they were places where people of modest means would live quite cheaply. There were few cars and everyone walked about.

The cottage was on the edge of an oak and maple forest and I spent eight or nine years in it, most of them happy, writing stories, essays, poems and books for children. I think this had something to do with Prem's children. He and his wife had taken on the job of looking after the house and all practical matters (I remain helpless



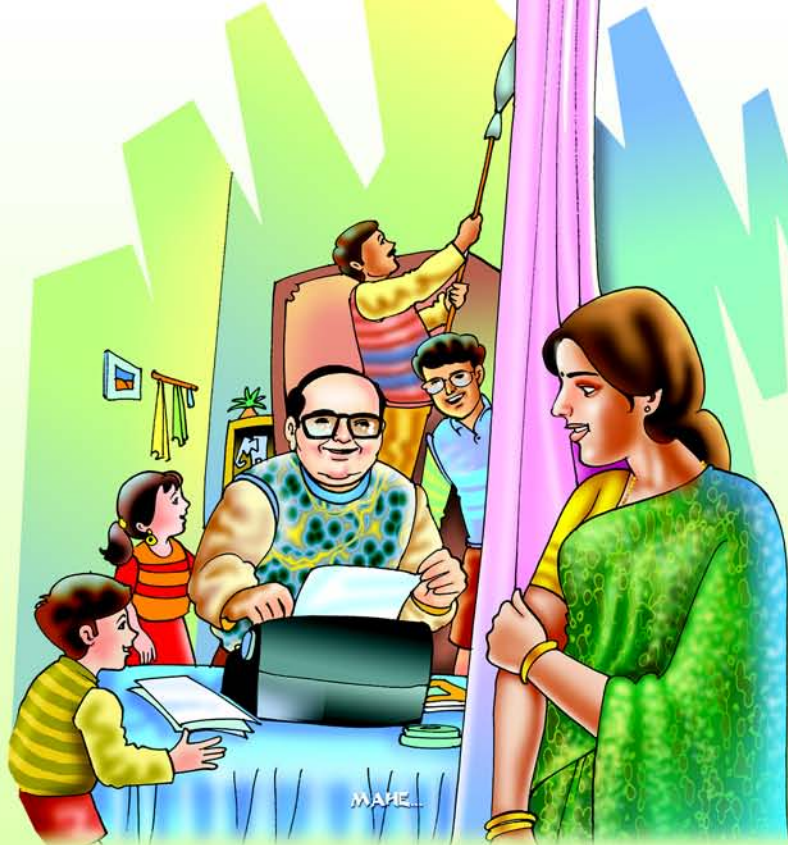


with fuses, clogged cisterns, leaking gas cylinders, ruptured water pipes, tin roofs that blow away when there is a storm, and the do-it-yourself world of small-town India).

Naturally, I grew attached to them and became a part of the family, an adopted grandfather. For Rakesh, I wrote a story about a cherry tree that had difficulty in growing up. For Mukesh, who liked upheavals, I wrote a story about an earthquake and put him in it, and for Savitri I wrote rhymes.

'Who goes to the Hills, goes to his Mother', so wrote Kipling, and he seldom wrote truer words. For living in the hills was like living in the bosom of a strong, sometimes proud, but always a comforting mother. And every time I went away, the homecoming would be tender and precious. It became increasingly difficult for me to go away.

It has not always been happiness and light though. There were times when money ran out. Editorial doors sometimes close; but when one door closes another has, for me, almost immediately, miraculously opened.



When you have received love from people and the freedom that only mountains can give, then you have come very near the borders of Heaven.

Newly married Sushant and Seema, whose finances were quite tight, lived in a tiny one-room flat rented out by a tyrannical landlord, Mr. Khan, who lived next door. The rent was too steep and the facilities sadly inadequate, but they did not know how to hint at it to the thick-skinned landlord, and could not afford anything better.

One day, Mr. Khan dropped in and declared in his usual peremptory fashion, "I'm going away on a 2-week vacation. I was just wondering what to do with my pet parrot, Mithu. Then I remembered you.

## Parrot's prattle



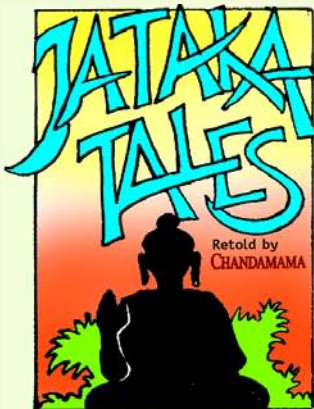
The bird is an absolute delight; he's just learning to talk. I'm sure you'd like to keep him and look after him until I return!"

The young couple had no choice but meekly agree. Mr. Khan happily went off on his vacation after dumping his pet on them.

On his return, Mr. Khan was delighted to find his parrot lively, healthy, and apparently very well cared for. However, he soon realised that he had underestimated his tenants. For, as soon as he had brought him back home, Mithu began to talk, declaiming over and over again - "The rent's too high - take pity on poor Sushant! The rent's too high - take pity on poor Sushant!"







In a hamlet near Benares lived a sow and her two piglets. The sow was a nervous creature.



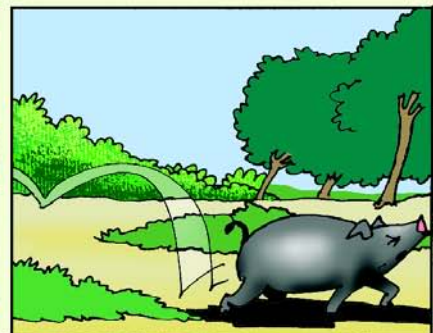
She was afraid of everything under the sun.



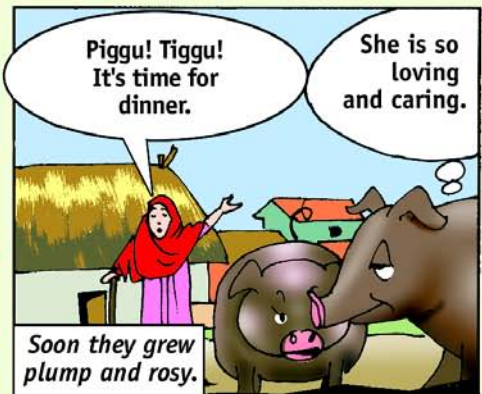
One day while foraging for food, they heard a strange noise. The sow was alarmed.



She did not wait to find out what it was. She fled leaving her young ones behind. But she need not have worried. It was only old Panna, tapping her stick on the ground.



When Panna saw the abandoned piglets, she felt sorry for them. She took them home to rear them as her own children.



Before long there was a feast in the village. And the guests wanted to eat ham.











A PAGE FROM INDIAN HISTORY

# The Fort of King Jaisingh Deva



**A**ll kings have their favourite dreams. Some have the ability to carry them out. There are others who, despite their desire, lack the resources to fulfil them. But if they are good rulers and are loved by their people, their dreams sometimes come true unexpectedly. This is what happened to King Jaisingh Deva of Malwa, now part of Madhya Pradesh. He was a kind and generous ruler, dearly loved by his people. His kingdom was a modest one. There were many things he wanted to do but could not because he did not have enough means. One of them was to build a fort, a really big one. But building a fort cost a great deal of money. Jaisingh Deva

simply could not afford it. Then, one fine day two of his subjects— a poor grass-cutter named Nandu and a blacksmith named Mandan—helped him realize his dream.

Nandu had a strange experience. While he was cutting grass as usual, his sickle suddenly struck a stone and it turned a bright yellow. He picked up the stone in astonishment. It looked like any other piece of smooth rock. But somehow the yellow sickle had lost its edge and was of no use. He sighed and went to the blacksmith to get it sharpened once again. Being a simple man, he did not realize that his sickle had turned into gold. Mandan the blacksmith straightened up from the anvil where he was hammering a horse shoe. He took the sickle and looked at it carefully. A strange expression lurked in his eyes. “How did this happen?” he asked casually. Nandu told him.

“Where exactly was the stone? What did it look like?” he asked again.

“Like any other stone,” said Nandu impatiently. “Grey, smooth and round. It was in that patch of long grass behind the big banyan tree. There are thousands like it scattered all over the place. Now tell me, what shall I do with this sickle of mine? Can you sharpen it?”

“I don’t think so,” said Mandan. “I’ll give you a new sickle. Luckily I’ve one right here.”

“You’d better keep the old one. It’s no use to me,” said Nandu.

Mandan looked at the sickle once again. It was pure gold. He realised at once what had happened. The stone against which the sickle had knocked was a *paras*, a touchstone which could turn any metal into gold. He simply had to find it! The sun was about to set. Before long everything would be dark. Mandan set off with a lamp and his hammer and made for the banyan tree. Starting from one corner he tapped each and every stone with his hammer. After hours of searching his





patience was rewarded. His hammer turned a bright yellow, gleaming and glittering in the moonlight, as it struck a stone. Mandan picked up the stone which had brought about the magic and rushed back home. He couldn't wait to see it work! He went to the little shed where he worked all day. It was full of iron articles - spades, trowels, sickles, pots and pans. As Mandan touched each piece with the stone, every one of them turned into gold. His fortune was made! He laughed with joy as he realised that his days as a poor blacksmith were over and a wonderful new life awaited him.

But Mandan could not sleep that night. He kept thinking of the king. King Jaisingh Deva, always so kind, just and generous! Didn't this stone rightfully belong to him since it was found on his land? And didn't he deserve to own it? He would put it to far better use. And Mandan knew that he would use most of it for the welfare of his people. Mandan had no real right to own it. Besides, he already had a big heap of things that the stone had turned into gold last night.

Mandan rushed to see King Jaisingh Deva the very next morning and presented him with the touchstone, telling him the whole story. "Just one request, Sire," he told the king. "If you should build any monuments with money made from the stone, please ask the builders to use some anvil-shaped stones."

"That's a strange but simple request," said the king, "I shall certainly remember it."

"It's because I would like the people to remember me and my profession," said Mandan.

Jaisingh Deva put the stone to excellent use, performing various acts of charity with the money made from it. And he built the wonderful fort-city of Mandu. He now had so much wealth at his disposal that this colossal task took him just twelve years. He remembered Mandan's request and asked the builders to use anvil-shaped stones wherever possible. Many of them remain to this day although a great deal of the original fort is in ruins.

You might like to know what happened to the touchstone. Having lived a full and happy life, Jaisingh Deva gradually grew disinterested in worldly matters. He

decided to leave the kingdom and spend the rest of his life in prayers and meditation. Just before abdicating, he held a feast on the banks of river Narmada and invited all his subjects. As he walked among his people for the last time, he gave away money, jewellery, gold and silver to all and sundry. Finally when he came to the royal priest, he gave him the precious touchstone with a smile. The priest had been expecting gold and diamonds. He felt so angry when the king gave him a mere stone that he threw it into the river. Needless to say, he had no idea that it was the touchstone. When he realised later what he had done, he was crazy with regret. But it was of no use! The river was unfathomably deep just there. The *paras* was lost and lost for ever!

Abul Fazal, Akbar's historian, mentions this legend in his famous book *Akbarnama* and also in his *Ain-i-Akbari*.

- By Swapna Dutta





# Newsflash

## In memory of Kalpana Chawla

**P**eople in the USA will not easily forget the India-born astronaut, Kalpana Chawla, who was one of the seven crew who perished when their space shuttle *Columbia* disintegrated midair in February 2003. The University of Texas, in Arlington, has named the new residence hall after her. The three storey hostel, which can house some 400 students, has been specially designed to encourage combined study. It was from this university that Kalpana Chawla got her master's degree in aeronautical engineering in 1984. Earlier, a road in New York was re-named after the woman astronaut. Jackson Heights is dotted with shops and stores selling Indian goods. While un-veiling a plaque at one end of the road, the Mayor of New York said Kalpana Chawla belonged to two countries, India and the USA.



## Non-stop dance



**T**he Jawaharlal Nehru stadium in New Delhi was the venue where forty young men and women danced for 55 hours in July to create a new world record. They broke the earlier record of non-stop dance for 52 hours 3 minutes made in Cleveland, USA. In fact, India was creating such a record for the

second time. In 1999, a group dance lasting 50 hours was held at Gurgaon, in Haryana, for the MTV channel.

## Parrot solves murder mystery

**N**ot exactly, but this parrot in Tukaram Gate, in Hyderabad, was instrumental in the culprit confessing to his crime. Mallesh has been making a living by painting houses. One day in August, the 27-year-old painter was keen to know his fortune and went to a wayside parrot astrologer, who is a familiar figure all over India. He posed his question to the astrologer who then repeated it for the benefit of the parrot and then let the bird come out of its cage. The parrot chose a card from among a pack. Mallesh took it and read the message: "Own up your sin; otherwise you will end up in misery." Mallesh was shocked and for the next few moments he was full of remorse when he remembered that he had committed a murder three years ago. He did not have a second thought; he made his way to the nearest police station and confessed to his crime.







## The stick and the pestle

There was still an hour to go for sunrise. Mulla Nasruddin was deep asleep. But not so the cock! It preened its wings, fluttered them, making all the hens in the coop take note of its crown of red and snuggle closer to it. However, before the hens could crowd around him, the cock took off, with short hops and flights, till it found a suitable perch on top of the roof. There it stood, proudly, and cocked its head all around. It felt it had a duty to perform. That was to send the wake-up call to the sun. So the cock tilted its head skyward and heralded the dawn by sounding loud cock-a-doodle-doo notes.

Mulla Nasruddin heard the shrill notes, but ignored the calls. He kept snoring happily till the first rays of the sun dropped in through a slit in the wall and danced on his eyelids. He lay in bed, with wide-open eyes, watching a spider, busily spinning a web in a corner of the room, where the ceiling met the walls. His wife had removed the cobweb only the previous evening, but the web was almost back in place now.

The spider was running around, giving the finishing touches to its home. A thought struck the Mulla and brought a smile to his lips. The spider had food served at its doorstep. Tiny insects and small flies walked into the web to feed the spider. Ah! If only he could be as lucky! If only some kind genie would deliver food and drinks and delicacies at his doorstep! If only!

He was still wishing for the impossible when he heard his wife shout, from the kitchen, ticking him off for being lazy. "It is time, my old man, to be up on your feet. You have a day's work ahead of you. Hurry up!" her sharp tangy voice eddied around.

"Can't a man enjoy his rest, stay in bed for a few

extra minutes, without being reminded that he has to work for a living?" he spat back.

"Go and tell that to the sun," his wife was a sharpshooter.

"Watch your tongue, you silly old wretch!" he shouted. "You sent me to bed without food last night. Remember that!" he groaned.

She didn't hear him as she had moved off to the shed to check on the donkey. So she did not respond.



That gave Nasruddin wrong ideas. He assumed that the sharp reproof had left his wife wordless. He felt proud of the fact that he had silenced her.

That did not happen often. She was once a pliant woman, but now she often turned cantankerous. Part of the fault was his, admitted Nasruddin. He did not give her enough money to manage the house. Not his fault. He didn't hold a regular job. His income came in fits and starts. When he received a fat fee for services rendered to the rich, he lived like a prince, wine and dined in style, entertained lavishly. At other times, he and his wife had to beg and borrow to survive.

His wife was sweet and sugary when he brought in





enough to live in comfort. But when they ran out of cash and had to skip meals or do without good food, her temper too turned bitter. And, till he brought in enough cash, she continued to go after him, hurting him with words tipped with poison.

Yet, on this occasion, though there was not a shekel he could call his own, he had managed to silence his wife.

Swelling with pride, he bounced out of bed, slipped his feet into the slippers that lay on one side of the cot, moved to the bathroom, washed his face and hands and feet and brushed the teeth with a twig, while the scene of dinner, on the previous night, came back to him.

His wife had served him a frugal dinner. All that she set before him was a plate of rice, with a chunk of hard meat and gravy. He picked up the meat and took a bite. "Ouch!" he cried, his face contorting with pain, caused by a rotten tooth that had bit into the meat. Pain made him angry. Anger made him bold enough to tick his wife off. He threw the meat at her face and shouted, "You're stupid. Even a donkey knows how to prepare a dish with this meat. But you!" he swung his arms wildly all around.

"How dare you call me a donkey?" she spat back.

"You are one. And, when it comes to stupidity, you beat the stupidest of them all!" his flowing beard swung up and down.

"If I am a donkey, you are one too," she felt it was time she gave him back in his own coin.

"Have you gone mad, you stupid woman?" the Mulla had expected her to rush to his side to see whether she could fetch him a balm to the shooting pain.

"No, I'm perfectly sane. Listen, you said I am a donkey. Since only a donkey marries a donkey . . .," she had left the sentence incomplete.

"You'll pay for it, you wily woman!" Mulla Nasruddin had got up, without eating the food, and stomped off to bed.

He brushed the teeth, vigorously, while brushing aside the memory of the last night. He did not want to relive the scene. The tooth was not aching any more. That cheered him. "Ah, dear," he walked back to the kitchen hoping to get a cup of khawa. She was not there. However, he found the drink, kept on one side of the platform where the utensils were arranged neatly. He sat down on a small stool and sipped the drink, slowly. He set the empty cup back on the platform. Still there was no sight of his wife.

"Ah, dear, where are you? Won't you fetch my walking stick?" he spoke rather loudly.

The call reached her. Usually he picked up the stick on his own, in the mornings, when he wanted to go out for a stroll. Why was he asking her to find the stick for him?

"Have I to wait till eternity?" his voice sounded rather gruff and tough.

"The heavens won't fall, if you do that," she shouted back, from the back of the house.

"My stick, this minute!" he chuckled to himself, happy that he still had the courage to order his wife around.

She did not like to be ordered around.

"Go and fetch it yourself, as you always do," she growled, while giving the donkey its feed.

"Fetch the walking stick, right away!" Nasruddin repeated the demand.

That roused her darkest fears. Why did he insist that she got him the stick? Had he some funny ideas? Ideas that husbands often got into their head? Ideas that made





them feel they could tame their wives by using the stick?

"What for?" she asked, moving toward the kitchen.

"You are asking me? You ought to know. The stick is a man's best friend. It is effective in driving donkeys around," he replied.

She remembered that he had called her a donkey, the previous night. So he was telling her that he would use the stick on her. Then a funny idea came to her.

"One minute," she sent the words floating while hurrying to find the walking stick. She also found time to pick up the pestle. She came to Nasruddin, held the stick out to him, waited till he got hold of it, stepped back quickly to get beyond the range of the stick and took a deep breath, her arms tightening round the pestle.

"I didn't ask for the pestle," Nasruddin scowled.

"I've armed myself. I need it for my defence. I have enough sense not to hand over the stick to you and get a beating," she tapped the floor with the pestle.

"Why should I beat you? That is the last thing in my mind."

"I thought you were still angry with me."

"Angry? What for?"

"For serving half-cooked meat last night."

"O, Allah! My anger dies young, my dear. You know that. This is a fine morning. The air is cool. I wanted the stick to take along on my morning walk," he smiled at her.

"Well said, my dear Mulla," she put the pestle aside and smiled at him.

"Here, you get it, now that you don't have the pestle to hit me back," Nasruddin gave her a fright when he raised the stick up in the air, feigning he was about to whack her, saw her cowering in fright and laughed. "So you thought I am still angry, you stupid girl!" he held her gently by the arm, pressed it, reassuringly.

"I'm not stupid. Didn't you notice that I brought the pestle along," she cooed.



"I know. But you acted rather foolishly when you put the pestle away, after I said I wanted the stick to take with me on my morning walk," he gently pinched her cheek.

"My cheek is not for pinching," she feigned anger.

"Except by me."

"Ouch! It hurts!" she acted as if she was in deep pain.

"Serves you right. That is just punishment for serving your man a chunk of half-cooked meat," he joked.

"Shall I go and get hold of the pestle?" she joked.

The two laughed happily together.

**- By R.K. Murthy**



Sunflowers are looked upon as weeds when growing in cultivated fields or on the grazing land of the Great Plains of North America, but as wild flowers in uncultivated valleys. The sunflower is also a crop plant cultivated for its seeds; in some places it is a garden flower.







Do you know why wood is not used for building bonfires? Have you heard of a male lake and a female lake and what made the female lake move away from the male lake? Are you surprised that insects are secretly taken out of India for research?

A group of tourists was trekking on the Yuksam-Dzongri trekking trail in Sikkim. They were accompanied by a guide, besides porters and cooks. At the end of the day, the tourists were tired and cold. They requested the porters to build them a bonfire. For the tourists, this seemed like an exciting idea to get warm and cozy. However, much to their surprise, the porters refused to comply with their request. On being asked why, they said they had been taught during their training that wood should not be collected for bonfires along the trail since this led to its degradation. So amazed were the

tourists with this insight that they wrote a letter to the Chief Minister of Sikkim commending these people and congratulating the State for its 'ecosensitive' attitude.

Yuksam-Dzongri is a well-known trekking trail on the route to the mighty Khangchendzonga, the world's third highest mountain peak. The trail runs along the periphery of the Khangchendzonga National Park, famous for the red panda and many other animal and bird species. It starts from the village of Yuksam and winds its way to Dzongri and finally to Gocha La, covering a distance of 45km and reaching an altitude of



4,940 m. This is also one of the few trekking trails in Sikkim open for Indians as well as foreigners.

The village of Yuksam lies tucked away in the far western corner of Sikkim. Although highly revered (it is said that this was the place where the Gods first came and settled), it is known to be the first capital of Sikkim. Two of the State's sacred lakes, Kathok and Khecheopalri, are also situated in this area. Local elders tell an interesting tale about these lakes. Kathok is supposed to be a male and Khecheopalri a female lake. Kathok was given more importance, while Khecheopalri was neglected and polluted, by people dumping garbage into it. It is said that Khecheopalri became annoyed at this and went and settled far away from Kathok lake.

Yuksam used to be a sleepy little village. Tourists hardly spent any time at Yuksam before setting off on the trek. The villagers had very little interest in the tourists or the trail since only those who were hired as guides, porters or cooks earned from trekking activities. This remained so until a few years ago when a project on Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism started in this village. The aim of the project was to ensure that the people of Yuksam benefited from the trekking tourism on the trail, to address the threats that the biodiversity on the trail faced and then to try and influence the State government to introduce better facilities for tourism in general and ecotourism in particular.

The project tried to achieve these aims through training many different groups of people. There were training programmes for the guides who took tourists on the trail. These programmes made the guides aware of the do's and don'ts on the trail. The guides were also made to realize the importance of this trail because of its unique biodiversity. There were training programmes for porters and cooks, focused on how best they could carry

on with their activities without causing much damage to the trail. As a result of the training, these people became aware of the significance of this trail and this knowledge instilled in them a sense of pride and responsibility towards it. As feedback about these well trained and well-informed guides, porters and cooks went back to the State government, their wages were increased and this was an added incentive to do a good job.

Most of the guides, porters and cooks belonged to the village of Yuksam. As the other villagers watched these trainings and what resulted from them, they also got enthused and wanted to contribute to the project. They realized that if they made their village and houses more attractive to tourists, then perhaps these people who spent

### **Code of Conduct for the Yuksam-Dzongri Trail (You can follow this on your other travels too!)**

- \* Leave only footprints, take only photographs
- \* High altitude vegetation is frail. Avoid trampling follow trails and do not pick plants or flowers
- \* Do not disturb wildlife or its habitat.
- \* Do not buy endangered animal or plant
- \* Use kerosene or bottled gas for cooking, heating and lighting. Avoid using firewood
- \* Ensure that you are properly equipped with warm clothes.
- \* Avoid littering. Deposit garbage at designated sites.
- \* Keep all pollutants away from streams and lakes
- \* Do not give treats to local children; it only encourages begging
- \* Respect the sanctity of holy lakes and historical sites.
- \* Avoid smoking, drinking or loud talk
- \* Educate yourself about the ecology, customs, manners, and culture of Yuksam.

only one night in the village might stay longer. Many villagers started giving out rooms in their houses for tourists to spend the night. Shopkeepers started storing more things in their shops. Residents opened a few more restaurants as tourists started spending more time in the village. Yuksam seemed to suddenly wake up and take pride in its existence!

The youth of the village then decided to get together and form an organization which they called the





Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC). The Yuksam-Dzongri trail being on the periphery of the national park is managed by the Forest Department. The KCC, however, decided to help the Forest Department in keeping the trail clean, by organizing regular clean-up campaigns. The KCC also developed a Code of Conduct (see box) for all trekkers, very clearly pointing out what could and could not be done on the trail. Visitors to Yuksam were requested to follow the Code of Conduct. Planning for all these activities was carried out along with

all the villagers, who had an equal say on what should be done.

Once, while members of the KCC were cleaning the trail, they came upon two

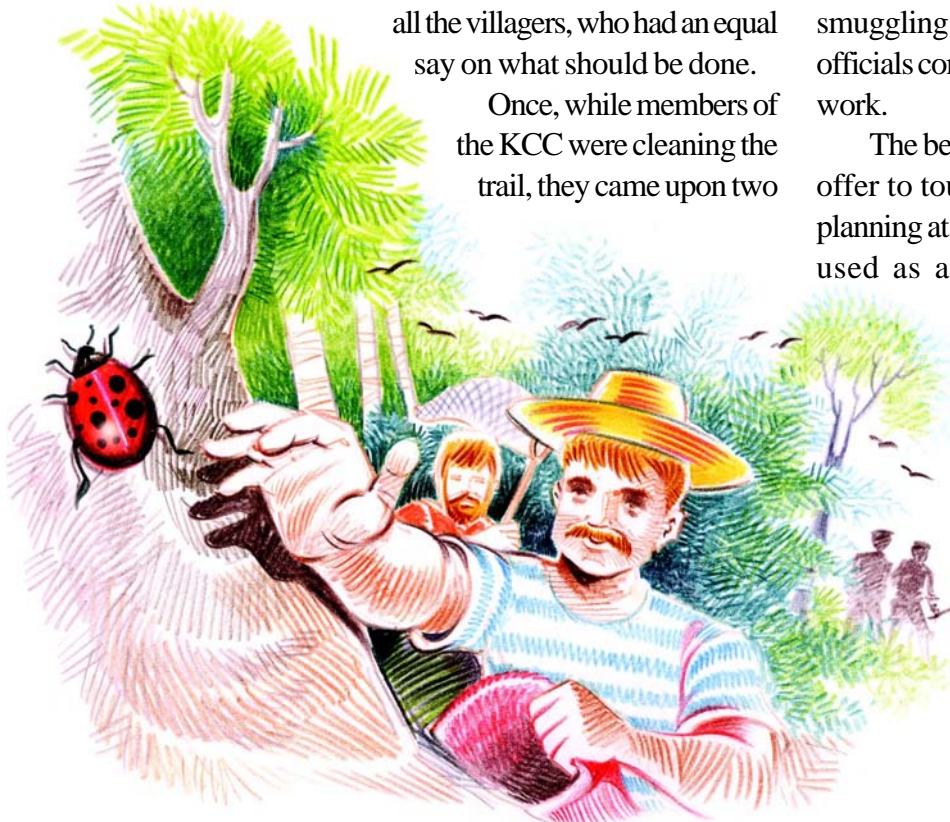
foreign nationals collecting insects. When questioned, they said they were scientists and the insects were for research. Members of the KCC got suspicious and asked the foreigners if they had taken permission from the Government to do so. At this point, the foreigners gave some excuse for not having taken permission and tried to leave the place. However, the members of the KCC were on the alert. The foreigners were handed over to the Forest Department officers in Yuksam. Investigations later revealed that they were part of a much larger group smuggling insects out of India! The Forest Department officials complimented the KCC members for their good work.

The beautiful Himlayan State of Sikkim has a lot to offer to tourists in terms of natural beauty. Tourism planning at Yuksam for the Yuksam-Dzongri trail is now used as a model for Sikkim. The State government is using this model for planning tourism in different parts of Sikkim. Perhaps the most important impact this project has had on planning in government is to ensure that different kinds of people ranging from the villagers, tour operators and government officials all sit together and plan for a particular area.

If ever you visit Sikkim, don't forget to trek on the Yuksam-Dzongri trail.

**- By Seema Bhatt  
Kalpavriksh**

**- Environment Action Group**



**DID  
YOU  
KNOW?**

Glaciers occupy only about 11 per cent of the Earth's land surface but hold roughly three-fourths of its fresh water.



A carnivorous animal of the canidae family, the wolf is believed to be the ancestor of the dog.

The Amazon River valley is the largest basin area in the world, and its rainforest stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the tree line of the Andes in the West.



# A PRINCE REGAINS LIFE



Swapnasundari was the only daughter of King Mahendra, who had seven sons. Before he passed away, he found brides for all the sons, and their marriages were performed on a grand scale. When the king died, Sundari was still young. The queen too passed away before long, leaving Sundari to the care of her sisters-in-law.

The seven women found that their husbands were very affectionate towards their sister. They resented this. They treated her like their maid-in-waiting, and often took complaints against her to their husbands. Soon the brothers, too, turned against her and Sundari found her life in the palace miserable. Though at times she would mumble and grumble and raise her voice of protest, Sundari never went to her brothers to complain about her sisters-in-law.

One day, Sundari thought she could bear their insults no longer. "It's time I told my brothers about you all! Let me see what they'll do to you," said Sundari refusing to act at their bidding. As the seven brothers were not present in the palace at that time, their wives turned her out of the palace. "Go away from here! You don't have a place in the palace."

"All right, I shall go away from here," said Sundari. "But I'll come back after marrying a prince myself."

"As if a prince is just waiting to marry you!" they jeered at her. "Go away, but don't come back here even if you get Chandan Raja for

your husband!"

Sundari decided that she would not wait till her brothers came back. She left forthwith. Before she left the palace gates, her youngest sister-in-law ran after her and said, "Here, take this bundle of clothes. You'll need them for your wedding. And this rice will come in handy to feed your Chandan Raja!" Sundari could hear peels of laughter coming from the other sisters-in-law as she crossed the palace gates.

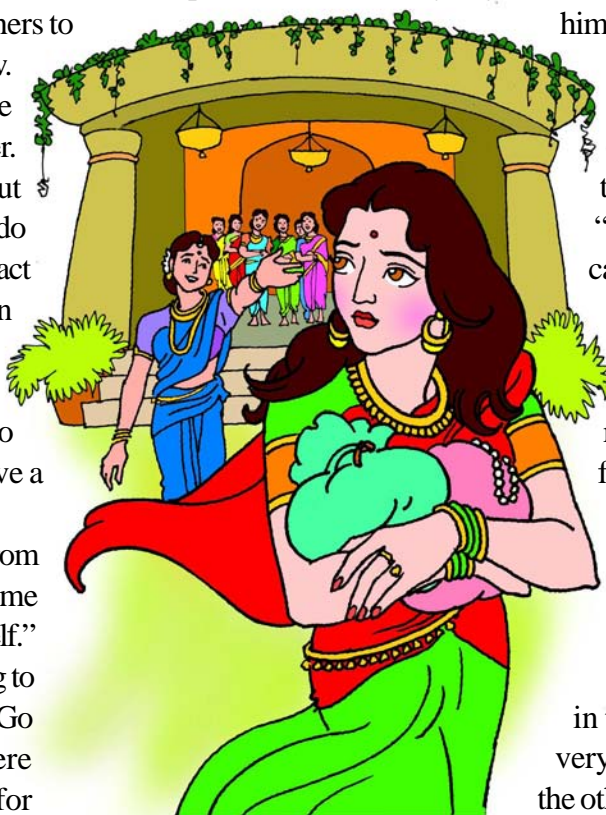
As she walked without any idea where she was going, the only thought that remained in her mind was the name Chandan Raja. Was he a king or a prince? But she had never heard of the name till then. It could be just a name even. Anyway she would try to get to know more about him and meet him wherever he was.

Sundari saw a group of women coming from the opposite direction. She accosted them and asked one of them, "Sister, could you tell me where I can meet Chandan Raja?"

Sundari saw a sudden gloom coming over her face. "Chandan Raja?" the woman replied, all the while looking at the faces of the other women. "But he died long ago!"

"Was he a king? Which kingdom did he rule?" queried Swapnasundari.

"He was a king somewhere in the south," replied the woman very casually, as she hurried to join the others.





Sundari now began walking towards south, for not one day but several days, till she reached a forest. She was surprised to see a huge mansion in a secluded spot. She went round the building, but could not find anybody inside. It appeared desolate.

She took courage and approached the building and entered through the door which she saw was open. It was only then that she noticed a dog and a cat in the front room. Were they the occupants of the huge mansion or were they its caretakers? Sundari wondered. She did not think it strange when the dog barked and the cat meowed. Sundari thought they were hungry. She opened her bundle and spread on the floor some of the rice from the bundle. Perhaps the rice was something new to the dog and the cat because they ate it with relish.

First the dog looked up at her face as though he wanted some more of the rice. Sundari noticed that the cat was playing around her feet. Did she also want more rice? Sundari told them that she did not have much rice left. She now saw the dog go inside and bring a packet. She was surprised when the dog began talking to her. "If you give me more rice, you can take this packet of red powder."

"What's special about this powder?" Sundari could not contain her curiosity.

"If a woman puts the powder on her forehead, her husband would have a long life. If an unmarried girl puts it on her forehead, she will get a husband of her choice."

Sundari opened her bundle and gave some more rice to the dog. She then took the red powder and applied it on her forehead. Meanwhile, the cat also had gone inside to bring another packet of powder. The cat pleaded:



"Take this white powder and give me some more rice!"

"And how will this powder help me?" Sundari asked of the cat.

The cat replied, "If you put it in your eyes, you will become invisible to others, while you will be able to see them."

Swapnasundari gave some more rice to the cat. The two grateful animals now told her that the place belonged to a giant who used to kill wayfarers coming that way and made them his food. He would leave the leftovers to the dog and the cat and by now they were fed up with human flesh and that was how they relished the rice given by Sundari. They warned her against staying back in the mansion any longer lest the giant came back and killed her.

Sundari gave them whatever rice was left with her and went away in a hurry. She cautiously proceeded through the forest, and fortunately did not come upon the giant. The forest bordered a jungle and she knew she would have to cross it before she came to a proper road and probably a village where she could take shelter. It was quite dark inside the jungle but she plodded on till she saw a light at a distance. Though feeling tired, Sundari forced herself forward.

The light had come from another huge mansion, this time looking almost like a palace. Sundari was surprised to see the elegantly constructed palace unoccupied. She slowly went into some rooms. There was no trace of any human occupation; the place had an eerie silence pervading all around. Suddenly she saw an open courtyard in the centre of the palace and a raised platform in the middle beneath a huge tree. She could not believe her eyes when she saw a handsome young man lying on the platform. She stared at him for a long time and he did not



appear alive. At the same time he did not look as if he was dead. The whole thing appeared to be strange to her and she, therefore, decided to wait and watch. She sat in one corner of the platform which was quite visible in bright moonlight.

Towards midnight, the body began to show signs of life. Soon, the young man sat up and rubbed his eyes. "Fairies! Fairies! Why haven't you come?" he said to himself.

"There are no fairies here, sir!" said Swapnasundari.

It was then that the young man was aware of the presence of an outsider. "Who are you? Where have you come from? How did you come here?" He asked all these questions in the same breath.

Sundari, who had by now stood up, said, "My name is Swapnasundari. I am a princess and I have seven brothers. My sisters-in-law have driven me out and now I find myself an orphan. I am in search of Chandan Raja and I hope to marry him."

"I'm Chandan Raja and I, too, am a prince," said the young man, "but I wonder whether you can marry me because I am dead during the day and till midnight when I get back my life for a few hours."

"O Prince! You were mentioning fairies. Who are they?" queried Sundari.

"Oh! That's a long story," said the young man. "I don't know whether there will be enough time to tell you about myself, but I shall make it brief. Otherwise you may have to wait till the next midnight when I'll wake up from my slumber."

After a pause he continued: "My father, the king, had no children for a long time. During a hunting expedition in a forest, he lost his way and reached a hermitage. The hermit gave

him shelter for the night and before he left next morning, the hermit gave him a garland of sandalwood flowers. 'Give it to your queen, and ask her to wear it. This garland has powers to give life. I say this because your wife will give birth to a stillborn child. However, if the baby is adorned with this garland, he will gain life. Both of you must ensure that the boy wears the garland all through day and night. He should never part with the garland.'

"The king went back and gave the garland to the queen and made her wear it. Her baby was stillborn, but when he was adorned with the garland, he came alive. The boy always wore the garland. When he grew up into a young man, one day, he slept on the terrace of the palace. That night, some fairies saw him and danced around him. One of them wanted him to marry her. He was not averse to the idea, but declined because she wanted him to accompany her to the fairyland. She then snatched the garland from him. The next morning he was found lifeless. The sandalwood garland was missing. It was evident that someone had taken it off the prince who, of course, had been named Chandan Raja.

"A search was made for the garland, but it was

nowhere inside the palace. The king and queen were inconsolable. They decided not to cremate or bury the body of the prince, hoping that some day the garland would be traced and the prince would come back to life.

"So, they built a beautiful palace in the jungle and placed the body on a platform in the courtyard. Once a week, the king and queen visited the palace in the jungle, sat around the body of their son, wept for sometime and went back. Obviously they did not know that the garland was in the possession of a fairy."

By the time the young man narrated his story, it was nearing dawn, and he appeared tired. He lay down and the next moment he became





motionless. Sundari decided to stay on till midnight, hoping the prince would come alive again. During the day, she saw the king and queen coming and sitting on the platform. After weeping over the body of their son, they left the place. As she had smeared her eyes with the white powder, she was invisible to them.

Around midnight, the body came alive. "O Prince, will you tell me when the fairies would come here? I shall try to get hold of the sandalwood garland from that fairy. I know how to make myself invisible," said Sundari.

Before the prince could respond, some ethereal music was heard. The prince said, "I think the fairies are coming. Look for the one with pink feathers; she was the one who took away the garland." After saying this, the prince lay down.

The fairies began dancing around the platform. The fairy with the pink feathers went up to the young man's body and touched him with the garland. He woke up. She repeated her question, "Won't you marry me, O prince?"

To which he replied, "I shall, but you have to stay with me in this palace. Are you willing?"

"How can I? I belong to the fairyland and I can't be anywhere else." The fairy got up and as she came down the high platform, she tripped against something, and fell down. It was Sundari who was invisible to the fairies. In a split second she eased out the garland from her neck.

A touch from the fairy took away the power of invisibility from Sundari and she now appeared in her true form, holding the garland. The fairy with pink feathers gave out a shrill cry: "Friends, we have been seen by a human being!" They all vanished in a trice.

Sundari now hurried to the body on the platform and put the garland around his neck. Lo and behold, the prince now stood up and took hold of Sundari's hands. "O sweet

woman! You've given me back my life. Let's go and meet my father and mother. They will be the happiest persons in this world."

Together they went to the capital where the king and queen were very happy. Their joy knew no bounds when they were also told that it was Swapnasundari who was responsible for the prince regaining his life. They were only too pleased to accept Swapnasundari as their daughter-in-law.

After their wedding, they went back to the palace in the jungle to stay as husband and wife.



The leaning Tower of Pisa bell tower, begun in 1174 as the third and final structure of the city's cathedral complex, was designed to stand 185 ft (56m) high and was constructed of white marble. Three of its eight storeys were completed when the uneven setting of the building's foundation in the soft ground became noticeable. Work was suspended several times as engineers sought solutions, but the tower was ultimately topped out in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, still leaning.





# MAIL BAG



**This came from New Delhi:**

In **Chandamama** all stories are full of fun and entertainment. The Kaleidoscope feature is my favourite. I like all the illustrations, especially the one on the cover page.

- **Nandita Menon**

**Recieved from Bangalore**

I am a great fan of **Chandamama**. I like everything in it. I would feel it perfect if a pen-friends column is added as a separate section. Your photo caption contest answers are perfect.

- **Collins Abraham**

**And this from Ajmer**

I must compliment you for bringing out such a fantastic children's magazine. I must admit that due to your magazine, I could pick up and polish my English language to a very high standard. It was all due to my mother's persistent endeavour and great help from **Chandamama** that today I can proudly say that I am much better informed and knowledgeable than my friends.

- **Ashna Ashesh**

**This came from Gurgaon**

I am reading **Chandamama** for the past two years. You should devote a page for pen-friends.

- **Abhishek Deodhar**



## Chhatrapati Sivaji Terminus

The feature in Indiascope in our September issue had wrongly shown the building of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, instead of the Victoria Terminus, now called the Chhatrapati Sivaji Terminus. Alongside we print a picture of the CST. The inadvertence is regretted.

- **Editor**







## LEGENDS FROM OTHER LANDS (AFGHANISTAN)

# JEWELS IN THE LOAF

There was a king who was very curious to learn how people used the good luck that came to them. One day he asked the royal baker to make two handsome loaves. While one was to be ordinary, though big and frothy, the other was to contain jewels.

One old courtier used to distribute alms once a week in the morning. The king took him into confidence and told him about the special loaf. "My friend, give this to a man who, you feel, deserves it. The other one you may give to whoever comes to beg."

In the morning two men approached him. One, with his long beard and long robe of a particular colour, looked like a holy man. The other was an ordinary beggar. The nobleman handed the loaf containing jewels to the holy man and the ordinary one to the other man.

The king observed this from the terrace of his palace. As he looked on, he saw the holy man feeling the weight of the loaf, transferring it from one hand to another. He obviously decided that the loaf had not been properly baked.

"My friend, this loaf appears heavy. It may have more stuff in it than the one you hold. I am not that hungry. Why not we exchange the loaves?" he asked. The beggar, without a word, handed over his loaf to the holy man and took the latter's.

The king told himself, 'God, in His infinite wisdom, does not wish the holy man to fall a prey to the lure of jewels. He does not wish to change him into a rich man.' The king was satisfied with his own explanation of the incident. But he could also observe a sly smile on the holy man's face. No doubt, the holy man seemed to think that he had cheated the other man by giving him a half-baked loaf.

That made the king quite curious. Immediately he asked two of his intelligence officers to follow the two men and report to him what they did with the loaves. He received the reports in the evening. The so-called holy man went into his hut and took off his robe and even his beard and ate the bread and a few other items of food he had collected. He then fixed the beard on his face once again and put on the holy robe and set out to beg from the market.

The beggar, on reaching his hut, cut

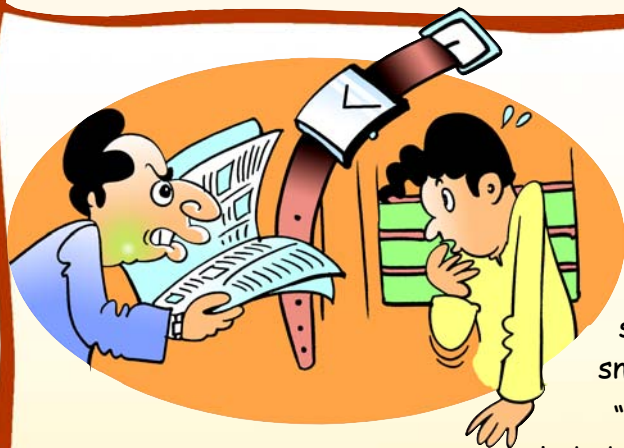


the loaf and was amazed to find the jewels. His wife jumped for joy and wanted to make a necklace for herself. But the man said, "Through a nobleman God gave this to a holy man and the holy man gave this to me. It is a trial of my conscience. First I must hasten to the nobleman and find out if the jewels had been put inside the loaf by mistake. They could have been stolen from the nobleman's house and the thief might have put them inside the loaf. He probably wished to carry it home safe, but somehow the chance did not come. But if the nobleman knew about it and he wished the holy man to profit by it, it should go to the holy man. Otherwise we can use it partly for ourselves and partly for our needy neighbours."

And before long the man met the nobleman, bringing the jewels along with him. He was summoned by the king who not only asked him to keep the jewels but also rewarded him for his exemplary honesty.

"Providence snatched it from the cheat who pretended to be holy. But the lesson I received is valuable. Had I remained satisfied with my own explanation of the exchange, I would not have known the truth. In other words, it is vain to rest content under the impression that one knew the truth," the wise king told the nobleman and his other courtiers.

- By M.D.



## Stranger's answer

A young man boarded a train bound for Kolkata and sat down beside a prosperous - looking passenger. "Can you tell me the time, sir?" the young man asked, attempting to strike up a conversation. The stranger glanced at him contemptuously. "Get lost!" he snapped.

"What the devil is wrong with you!" the young man exploded indignantly. "I ask you like a gentleman what the time is and you answer so rudely." The older passenger turned and said, "All right. Okay, so I tell you the time. Then you start discussing the weather, politics, the war, business - soon we discover that we're both Bengalis. So what happens? I live in Calcutta but you're a stranger there, so I must extend the traditional Bengali hospitality and invite you to my house. There you meet Sonali, my loving daughter, and after a few more visits you both fall in love. - after all, I admit you are a rather handsome young fellow. Finally you ask for my blessings so that you and Sonali can get married. So, why not avoid this big deal? I can tell you right now, young man, I positively refuse to let my daughter marry anyone who can't afford to own a watch!"







## Laugh till you drop!

It was a happy reunion between old friends. 'We've known you for ages, haven't we, Ram?' the girl said as her brother nodded.

"Remember how we used to romp together when we were children?" her brother added.

"Yes," Ram said nostalgically, "you two are my old pair of rompers."



ଓହଓହଓହ



A child was being examined to test her reliability as a witness.

"Do you know anything that is in *Bhagawad Gita*?"

"I know everything."

"What?" the judge exclaimed in astonishment. "Tell us some of the things that are in there."

"Well," she said, "there's a picture of sister's fiance, one of mother's recipes for tomato chutney, a curl of mine and the pawn ticket for daddy's watch."



"Call me a taxi," said the fat man.

"Okay," said the doorman.

"You're a taxi, but you look more like a truck to me."

ଓହଓହଓହ

**Professor:** "I take great pleasure in giving you eighty-one in mathematics."

**Student:** "Why don't you make it a hundred and really enjoy yourself?"



## Dushtu Dattu



### WHEN GRANDMOTHER CAME TO MY AID

This happened when I was studying in LKG. We—my grandparents, parents and I—were visiting Mysore during the holidays. By the time we reached the famous Krishna Raja Sagar, it was evening. The Brindavan Gardens was by then illuminated with colourful lights. It was a feast to the eyes.

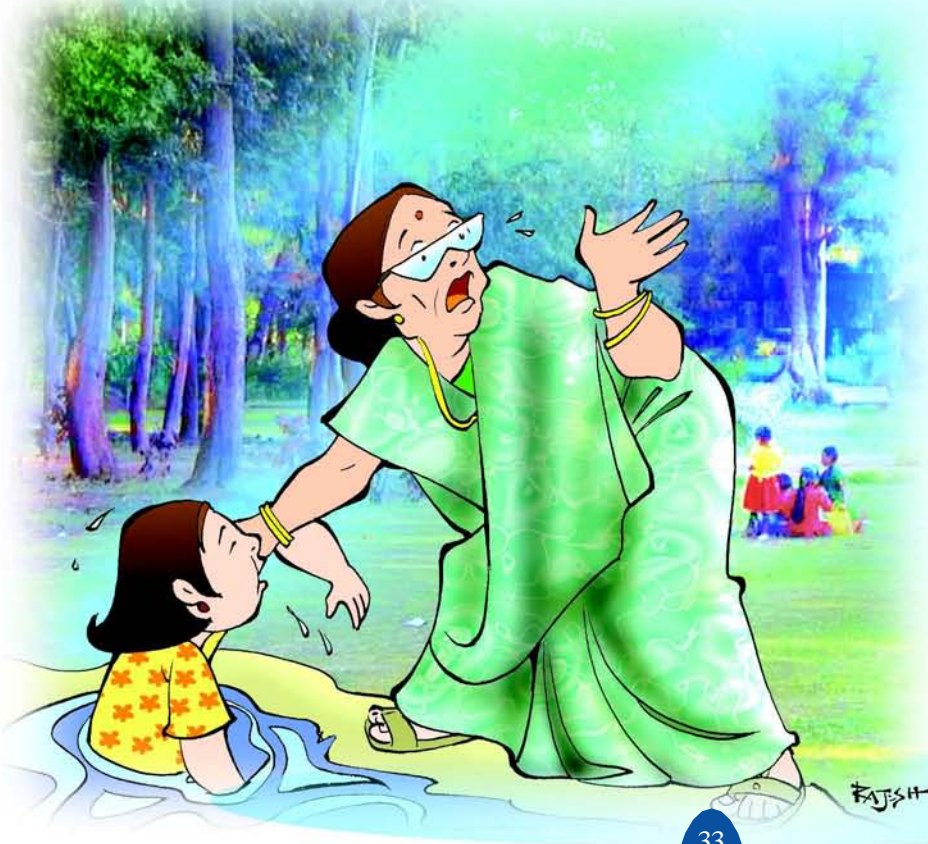
As it was a Sunday, the place was quite crowded. We got down from our vehicle and joined the milling crowds. We went round the Gardens and enjoyed its beauty. We slowly walked towards the dancing and singing fountain which was on the other side of Brindavan.

Before, we could reach it, I accidentally fell into the nearby pond. My grandmother, who was walking right behind me, immediately caught hold of my hand. As she could not raise me herself, she cried out for help.

My father, who was walking ahead with my grandfather, heard grandmother's cries and quickly turned around and rushed to the pond. He caught hold of my hand and raised me up. What would have been a mishap was averted, thanks to my grandmother's presence of mind. I would never forget how she saved my life.

It was a memorable day.

**Anusha H.S. (13),  
Shimoga**







## TENSION

Tension, tension, tension!

All have tension.

Tension here, tension there;

Tension everywhere.

My papa's tension, export order completion;

My mama's tension, child's education.

Children's tension, examination;

People's tension, choosing politician.

Principal's tension, students' participation;

Teacher's tension, notebook correction.

Sportsman's tension, selection;

Nation's tension, world recognition.

My tension, seeing everyone in tension.

God! Help us out of this TENSION.

- Shikha Nair (10), Mumbai

## MY WISH

**V**alleys I saw yesterday,

**A**nd there I saw some lambs,

**I** wished that I was a lamb,

**S**o I sheared the wool of one lamb,

**H**ow beautiful it was!

**A**ll I did was,

**L**aid the wool all over my back!

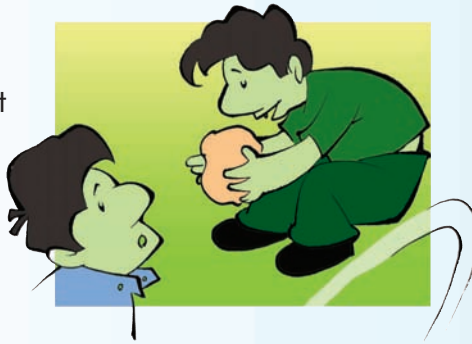
**I** then knelt down with my hands on grass.



*An acrostic by K. Vaishali (8), Erode*

**Akash :** How can a ball bounce without air in it?

**Ramu :** Well, I can hold it and then jump.



**Vishesh V. Iyengar (6), Gujarat**

**Judge :** I declare the defendant innocent.

**Defendant :** Does that mean I can keep the jewellery?



**Kaju** (on seeing friend Raju eating chocolate and taking soft drink at the same time) : Don't you

know that there are germicides in soft drinks and germs in chocolates?

**Raju :** That's why I'm taking both at the same time. The germicide will kill the germs.

**H.V. Vivek (12), Raichur**

**Ram :** I lost my dog!

**Sam :** Put an advertisement in the newspaper.

**Ram :** Don't be silly! My dog can't read.



**R. Nitthesh Raj (12), Bangalore**

**Astrologer :** I can make you a lakhpati.

**Client :** I'll kill you if you do that.

**Astrologer :** Why?

**Client :** I'm already a crorepati.

**Sanjana Pal (10), New Delhi**

**Teacher :** Why does the Statue of Liberty (in the USA) have a book in one hand and a torch in the other?

**Student :** One is not supposed to read in the dark.



**Kanchana (10), Chennai**



## FESTIVAL CROSSWORD

"Celebrate" all these festivals by solving the crossword! They appear from left to right, right to left, from top to bottom, from bottom to top and diagonally, upwards and downwards. Some celebration, eh? Follow the clues:

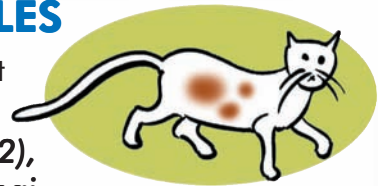
- Of importance to the Sikhs
- Time for sending greetings cards
- Festival of Lights
- Commemorating the resurrection of Christ
- Festival of Colours
- A Muslim festival
- The homecoming of a king from the nether world
- Marked by cooking rice, in the open
- Swings have a role in this festival
- When a Maharaja is taken in a procession of elephants
- New year for the Telugus and Kannadigas
- People flock to Brindavan and Mathura for this festival
- Dolls are put on display
- Worship of a goddess who killed a demon
- When the main festival is at night.

P	O	N	G	A	L	Z	J	K	Y	I
N	M	A	N	O	A	S	E	F	M	R
A	Z	B	X	A	A	L	E	A	D	T
V	S	U	A	M	T	F	T	W	I	A
R	K	G	X	I	I	H	O	N	W	R
A	R	A	Q	B	S	X	M	I	A	A
T	E	D	H	A	T	A	X	L	L	V
R	T	I	M	U	L	O	K	O	I	I
I	S	N	N	O	T	F	D	H	Q	S
S	A	R	A	S	A	D	H	Z	I	T
J	E	M	U	H	A	R	R	A	M	E

## RIDDLES

- What follows a cat wherever it goes?

**Preethi Narayan (12), Chennai**



- When does a car go exactly as fast as an aircraft?

**G.S. Anush (11), Chennai**

- Which is the laziest mountain in the world?

**N. Saiprashanth (6), Mysore**



- Why do bees have sticky hair?

- What do you call a pair of banana peels?



**Nivedita Patil (9), Pune**



- Which table has no legs?

**Kausalya S. (11), Bangalore**

- Its tail
- When it is placed inside the plane.
- Ever-rest
- Because they have honey-combs
- A pair of slippers
- Time table

**Riddles**

P	O	N	G	A	L	Z	J	K	Y	I
N	M	A	N	O	A	S	E	F	M	R
A	Z	B	X	A	A	L	E	A	D	T
V	S	U	A	M	T	F	T	W	I	A
R	K	G	X	I	I	H	O	N	W	R
A	R	A	Q	B	S	X	M	I	A	A
T	E	D	H	A	T	A	X	L	L	V
R	T	I	M	U	L	O	K	O	I	I
I	S	N	N	O	T	F	D	H	Q	S
S	A	R	A	S	A	D	H	Z	I	T
J	E	M	U	H	A	R	R	A	M	E

**Answers :**  
**Festival crossword**

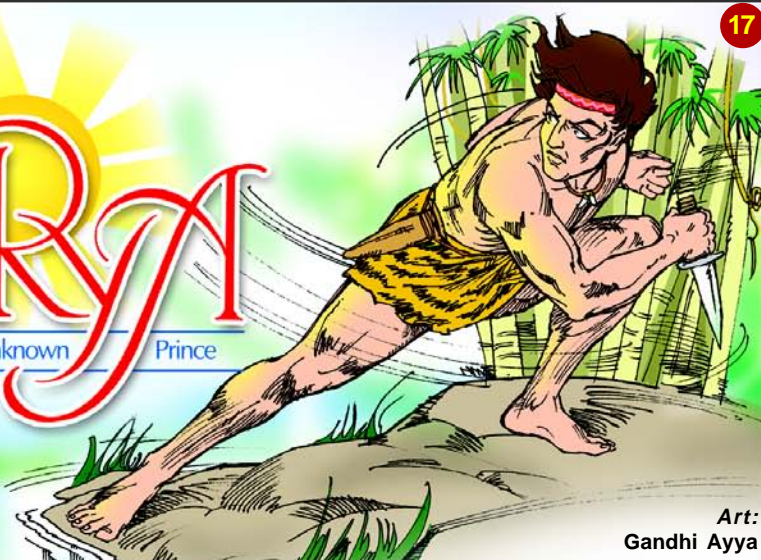




King Shantidev was happy that his son, though motherless, was safe with hermit Jayanand. He breathed his last in the hands of Vasant, leader of the rebels who had risen against the usurper Vir Singh. He goes for hunting in the forest. His soldiers succeed in catching Bhalooki the ageing bear. Suddenly they hear a voice: STOP!

# ARYA

The Mystery of the Unknown Prince



Art:  
Gandhi Ayya

Vir Singh is stunned on hearing the commanding voice.



Just a sage?

Jayananda emerges from a bush.



This part of the forest has never been disturbed.

I'm hearing that for the first time!

A good king never breaks a tradition.



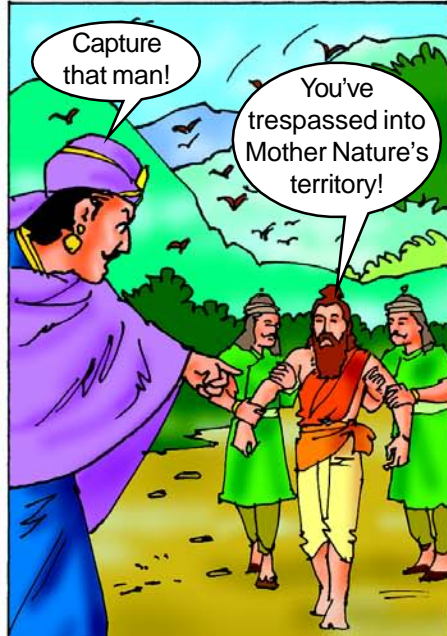
Am I not a good...

Before Vir Singh completes his sentence, he hears cries—from one of his men.



Run! Come away!

Ha! Ah! The bear has scratched me!



Capture that man!

You've trespassed into Mother Nature's territory!

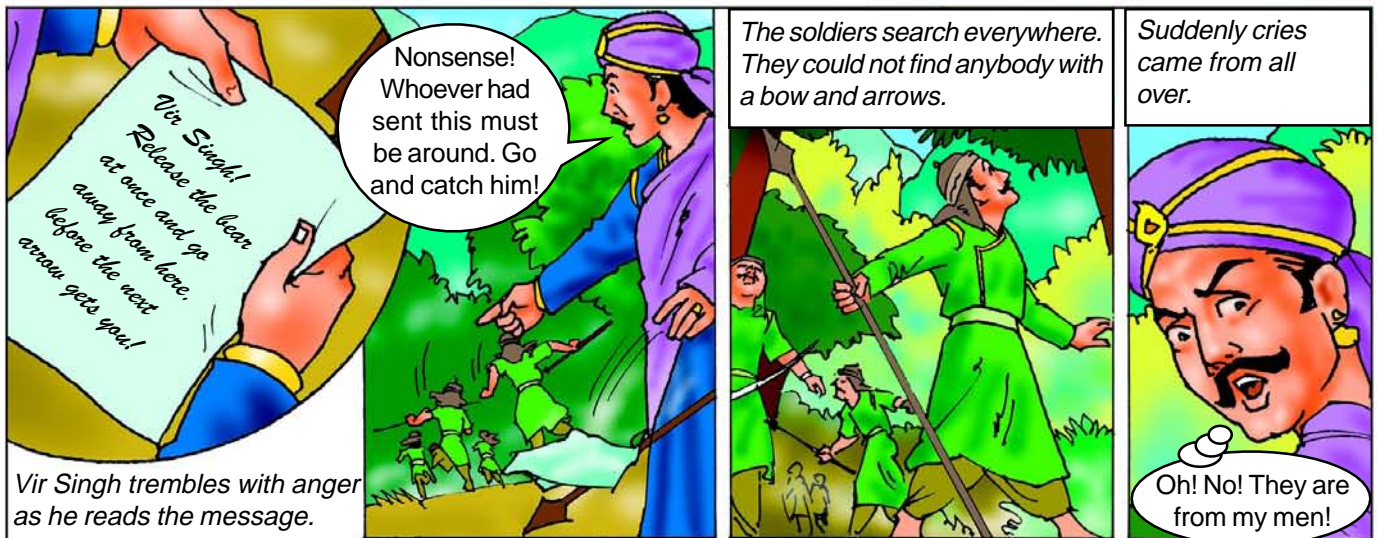


Hey! What's this? Arrows! A message?

Suddenly an arrow hits the ground in front of Vir Singh.













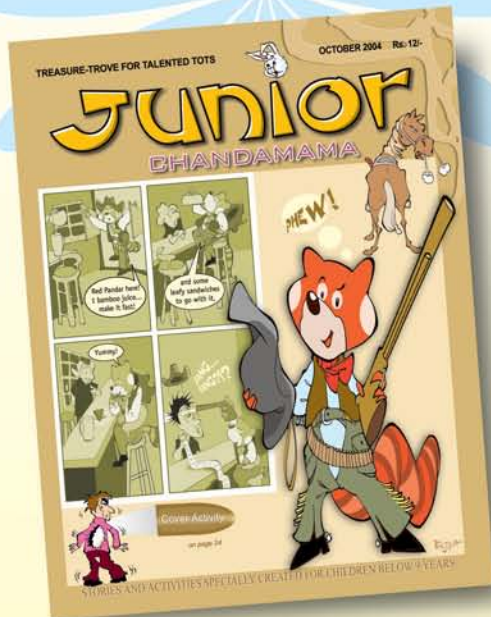






12 X 12 is 144 : Yes, right!

12 X 12 can also  
be 120!



How's  
that ?



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(If renewal, Subscription Number .....

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# READ AND REACT

## A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

### Read the story below:

King Rajaraj Verma rewarded the village watchman with a gold ring for catching a notorious bandit. A retired teacher saw a goonda snatching a silver chain from a little boy's neck. He called out 'Thief! Thief!' The passers-by followed his direction and caught the goonda. The king rewarded the teacher with a diamond necklace.

In the court the next day, a courtier asked the King: "Your majesty, you rewarded the watchman with only a ring, though he had caught a notorious bandit. You rewarded the teacher with a diamond necklace, but he had only helped a goonda to be caught. Why this discrimination?"

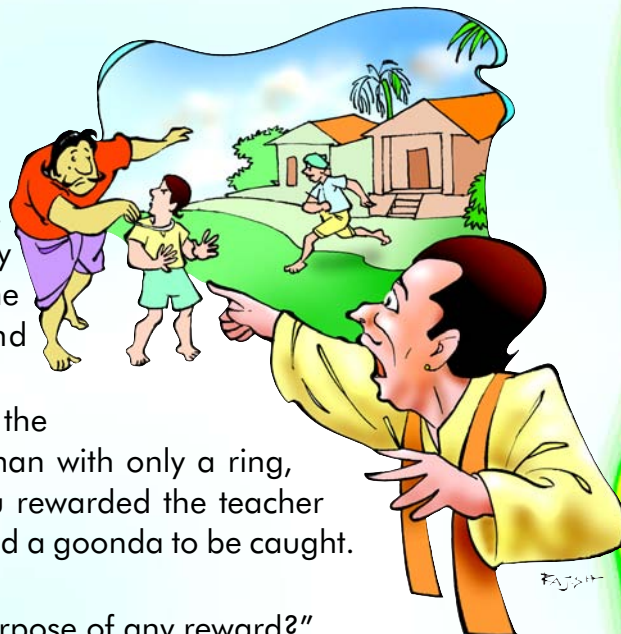
The king smiled and asked, "What is the purpose of any reward?"

"To recognise an act," replied the courtier. The king then went on to defend his act.

Now, keep the following points before you react:

- ◆ Did the king really discriminate between the watchman and the teacher?
- ◆ Did the king discriminate between the bandit and the goonda?
- ◆ What satisfactory answer would have the king given to the courtier?

Write your reaction in 100-150 words and send your entry with a suitable title along with the coupon below in an envelope marked "Read and React".



**CLOSING DATE : October 31, 2004**

Name -----Age-----Date of birth-----  
 School -----Class-----  
 Home address-----  
 -----PIN code-----  
 Parent's signature Participant's signature

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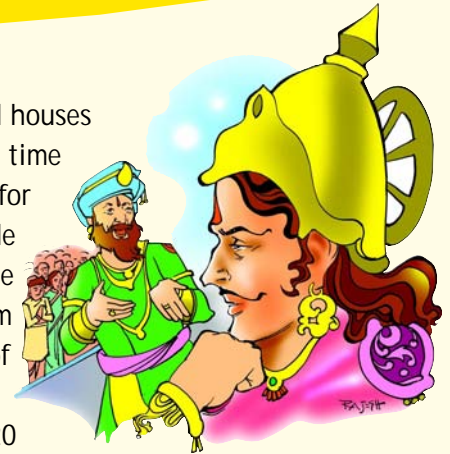
# PRIZE-WINNING 'REACTION'

(Compare with the story that appeared in the respective month)

## Contribution in cash or kind (April 2004)

The minister would have told the king that as the people who already owned houses would be employed, they would be engaged in their jobs and would not find time to help in labour. So, they had to pay 15 per cent of their annual income for resources to build houses. Those people who did not own houses would provide labour for the purpose and would have to repay the people who gave contributions. The latter could employ the former at minimal rates and from their wages the money could be repaid in instalments. Thus, the problem of unemployment would be solved.

All people receiving salaries above a certain point would have to donate 20 per cent of their annual income. This would continue till the expenses for the houses were met. Those who did not agree to help would be punished.



- Sreedevi R., Royapettah, Chennai



## The importance of devotion (May 2004)

During the meeting, a man stood up and said it would be wise to listen to the priest and meet all his demands. As it might even make the deity angry and may not cause rains.

Many of them agreed. But the village head was smiling at the simplicity of the villagers. He stood up and said, "We all know that the only way to please our deity is devotion and good deeds. There's no relation between good deeds and expensive robes. God can be pleased only by *bhakti* and nothing else."

It took them sometime to understand, but then they realised the greediness of the priest and their foolishness. They hailed the village head and decided to change the priest.

- Pramila Kulkarani, Faridabad, Haryana



## Money the greatest ailment (June 2004)

The landlord smiled mischievously on hearing the physician's query. He replied, "When you denied me medicines day after day, I understood you had a good reason for doing so. So, after a lot of soul-searching, I realized the greatest truth in life - 'Money is the greatest ailment in life, and charity is its only medicine.' My riches denied me peace and sleep as I was always worried about my money being stolen. My riches made me blind and stone-hearted towards the sufferings of other people. But now, after I have started giving away in charity, all illness has vanished into thin air. Now I feel as free and light-hearted as a man could be."

The physician smiled and replied - "I'm glad you've realized your folly. Remember, the good you do will always return to you."

The landlord smiled.

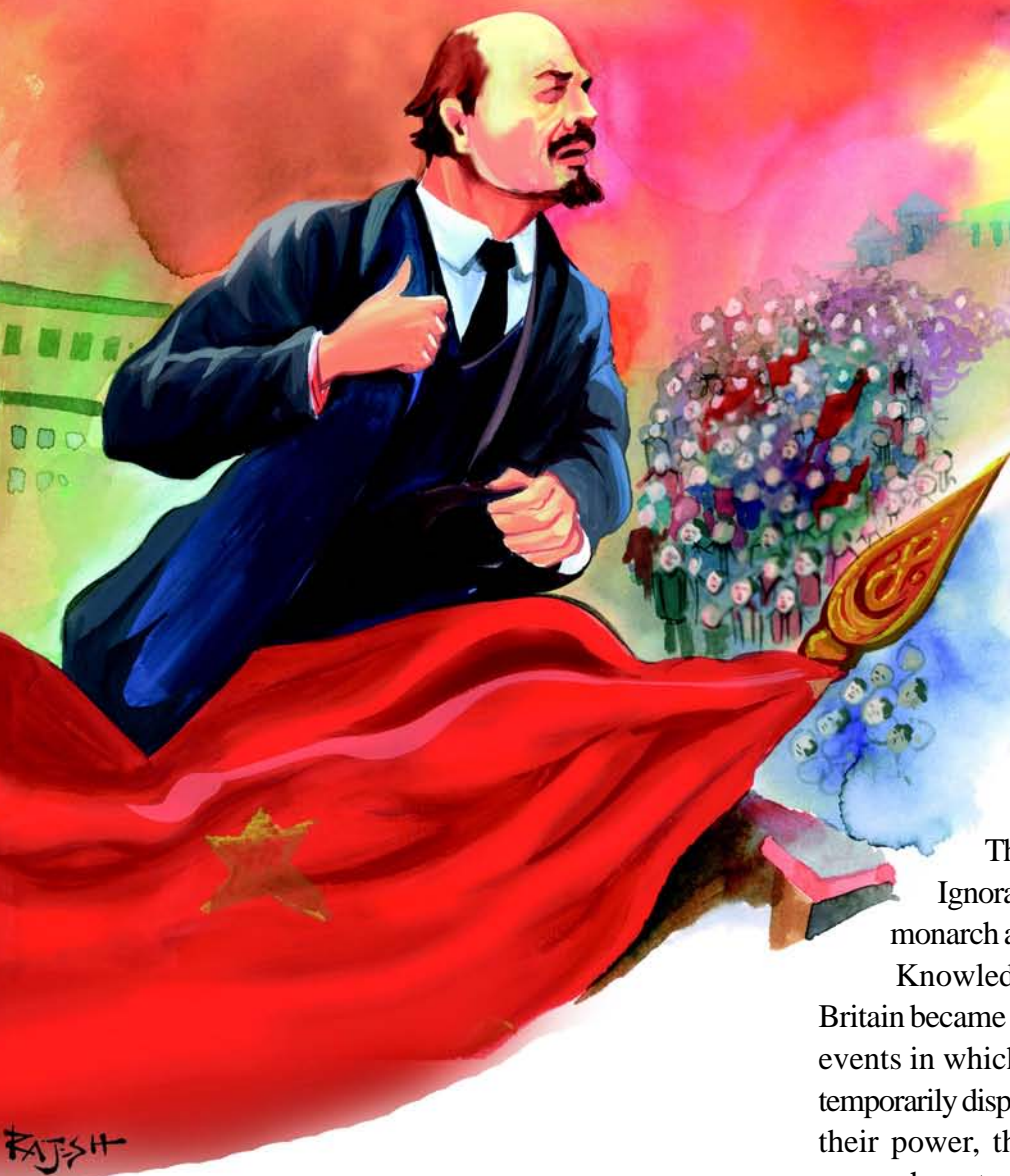
"I'll see that I never forget it," he replied.

- Reyomi Roy, Mumbai





## THIS HAPPENED IN OCTOBER



of a benevolent monarchy. For more than three centuries, Russia had been a monarchy. Some of the rulers (the Tsars) were truly great (like Peter the Great). Some were bloody (Ivan the Terrible). They enjoyed absolute power. The aristocracy lived in style.

The vast majority of people remained poor.

Ignorance of the poor insured the power of the monarch and the aristocracy.

Knowledge, it is said, is power. The people of Britain became aware of their power during the violent events in which the Roundheads, led by Cromwell, temporarily displaced the monarchy. The French realized their power, thanks to Rousseau. They threw the monarchy out and sought a new regime based on liberty, equality and fraternity, in 1794.

Russia, however, remained insulated. It looked as if monarchs might come and monarchs might go, but the Tsars would hold power forever. That belief received a rude shock in January 1905 when the people streamed into the streets to protest against their pitiable plight. Soon there was a sea of people, on every road leading to the Royal Palace at Petersburg. Had the Tsar's time come? Tsar Nicholas remembered the tragedy of Louis XIV of France and, earlier still, of Charles I of England. He came up with the offer of an

**A** great revolution took place on November 7, 1917; but it was called the October Revolution, because the Russian calendar showed the date as October 25, 1917. For, in Russia, even the calendar was stuck in a time warp. Only on January 31, 1918 did Russia dump the old calendar and catch up with the rest of the world.

It was perhaps the easiest of changes the Revolution could introduce. It required just an executive order by the new regime. Not so centuries of backwardness in ideas, systems, traditions, and social and economic imbalances. Hardly ever did the nation enjoy the benefits



# THE GREAT OCTOBER REVOLUTION

elected legislative body, the Duma. But the Duma did not truly become a representative forum. Adult franchise was nowhere on the scene. Voting rights were limited to the rich and the educated. The majority still did not qualify to vote. Further, the powers of the Duma were restricted.

However, some leaders of the people were not fooled. They saw through the game of the monarch and his henchmen and protested. The most powerful of these voices was that of Vladimir Lenin. He wished that the people had a more humane regime. This wish had been simmering in his mind since 1880. That year, his elder brother was executed on the charge of making an attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander III. Lenin, then 10 years old, felt deeply hurt. The accursed regime should go, he told himself. That became the mission in his life.

The regime spotted the rebel in him, while he was a student. He was only 17 when he was exiled to Siberia. Three years later, he moved to Europe, but returned to Russia in 1905 to lead the people. He spent the next two years, trying to wrest more powers for the Duma. But his best efforts brought no real change. Lenin became more critical of the regime and its reluctance to address the problems of the common man. Inevitably, he became a marked man in the eyes of the regime.

He got wind of the regime's plan to arrest him and quickly crossed the border. He lived in Europe, but kept in touch with his men, the Bolsheviks. He inspired them through the ideology of Karl Marx. Nobody would hand over power willingly, he argued. The peasants and the workers should get together to seize power from unwilling hands.

The outbreak of the First World War put back Lenin's plans. Most people, driven by patriotism, enlisted in the Russian army. Thousands of soldiers died. But victory was never at hand. Successive defeats on various battlefronts demoralized the nation. The war machinery

needed immense funds. The resulting crash crunch affected the poor more than the rich. Severe shortages made life almost impossible for the common man. Death due to starvation and absence of medical facilities became the order of the day. Yet the Tsar and the members of the aristocracy remained blind to the sufferings of the people. The people's discontent began to mount. The activities of Rasputin (he is often referred to as a mad monk) embittered the people. The Tsarina looked up to him as a demigod. She believed that he alone could cure her son of the deadly disease, hemophilia. That made him arrogant and conceited. He became a law unto himself. He became the centre of public hatred. Stories of scandals around misuse of power and funds by him and also by those in power spread like wild fire. Quite a few of the stories were false. But there was no way one could separate the truth from falsehood. Fact and fiction became intricately knitted and gained the strength of an avalanche with the riots in February 1917 in St. Petersburg. The riots spread quickly to other places, too. This time, the monarch had no sops to offer. The people had just one demand. **The monarch should go.** Tsar Nicholas had no option. He abdicated, handing over power to a provisional government.

But this government, packed mostly with the old guards, failed miserably in meeting public expectations. Lenin read the signs. He sensed that *his time* had arrived. On October 17, 1917, he left Switzerland for Russia; he was smuggled across the border on board a goods train. Thousands of Bolsheviks rallied round him.

On October 25, workers and peasants came out, ready to face the worst. Their hopes rose when soldiers too joined them. The provisional government, led by Kerensky, crumbled. The aristocracy was swept away. Two days later, Lenin became the head of the government.

The Great October Revolution became yet another red-letter day in the annals of history.

**-By R.K.Murthi**





# Science Fair

- By Rosscote Krishna Pillai



## October born—Chandrasekhar

**D**r Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, one of the greatest astrophysicists of the 20th century, was born on October 19, 1910 in Lahore (then in undivided India) to C.S. Ayyar (brother of Nobel Laureate C.V.Raman) and Sitalakshmi. Chandrasekhar was taught at home and showed all the signs of a precocious child. When his parents came to Madras (now Chennai), he joined the Hindu High School in Triplicane. He was very diligent in his studies; he used to procure and study the books prescribed for higher classes and be always far ahead of his classmates, especially in mathematics, which was a subject dear to his heart. He was only 15 when he joined the Presidency College, Madras, and took his post-graduate degree in physics before going to England in 1930; he joined the Trinity College, in Cambridge, and after six years of

outstanding research in astrophysics, he got his doctorate in 1936. This brilliant scientific work, five decades later, fetched him the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1983.

Applying the laws of quantum mechanics, an “exclusion” principle was enunciated. This principle puts limits on the packing together of the internal particles of matter. A new pressure develops because of the limiting factor. Applying this principle along with Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity, Chandrasekhar proposed that the new pressure would enable a star to remain in equilibrium provided it was not very massive. This limit on the star’s mass (quantity of matter in it) to maintain its equilibrium, which Chandrasekhar evolved through his calculations, is called the *Chandrasekhar limit*.

Chandrasekhar dedicated his entire life to astrophysics till he passed away in 1995. In an interview to this writer in 1968 in Delhi, he said the biggest contribution an individual could make to science was to train young persons. This famous scientist lived a very simple life in an apartment in Chicago. His biographer, Kameswar Wali, says that the Nobel Laureate used to cook circular dosas “with the same care as he writes his equations”.

### Is prize a mistake?

To an interviewer who asked for his reaction to his winning the Nobel Prize in Physics, Dr. Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, the India-born American scientist, said: “Have you heard the story about this general, who had all those gold medals on his chest? Someone asked him what they were for and he answered, ‘This first one here was a mistake, the rest simply followed.’”



# On your mark, get ready, go (to the moon)!

India is scheduled to launch by 2008 an unmanned spacecraft to the Moon. "Chandrayan-1" (meaning journey to the moon), which will be the country's first Moon Mission, is aimed at procuring intensive scientific knowledge about the Earth's satellite.

India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) will be used to launch the unmanned spacecraft. The PSLV will first launch it to a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). At the perigee of the GTO, by performing two operations using the Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) on board, the spacecraft will be raised to the apogee, 386,000 km from the Earth and very close to the Moon (called the Lunar Transfer Trajectory—LTT). The spacecraft will be near the moon in five and a half days.

According to Mr. Madhavan Nair, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), India's entirely own Moon Mission will explore the moon's surface using highly sophisticated cameras and instruments. Provision will be made to accommodate a few scientific instruments weighing up to 10 kg of the space agencies of a few other countries "who wish to take part in the programme on a cooperative basis". He pointed out further that Chandrayan-1 will pave the way for India's



future planetary explorations.

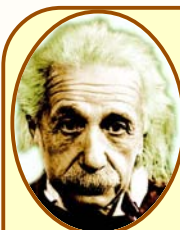
Chandrayan-1's main scientific objectives are to prepare a 3-dimensional atlas of the moon's surface and a chemical map of the lunar surface locating various chemical elements.

## Science Quiz

- Which living animal has the heaviest brain?  
a. elephant b. dolphin c. rhinoceros d. sperm whale
- Which living bird has the largest wing span?  
a. eagle b. kiwi c. wandering albatross d. ostrich
- Who was the first person to come out of a spacecraft while orbiting in space?  
a. Gagarin b. Armstrong c. Collins d. Leonov
- Which is the densest of all metals?  
a. uranium b. osmium c. thorium d. iridium
- Who made the first broadcast of human speech?  
a. Marconi b. Hertz c. Fessenden d. Braun

Answer: 1) d. sperm whale 2) c. wandering albatross 3) d. Leonov 4) b. osmium 5) c. Fessenden  
Reginald Aubrey, of USA in November 1900

We regret repeating the July 2004 quiz in the September issue by inadvertence -Editor.



## Einstein on Newton



This is what one great scientist thought of another great scientist. "Nature was to him an open book, whose letters he could read without effort... In one person he combined the experimenter, the theorist, the mechanic and, not the least, the artist in exposition. He stands before us strong, certain and alone; his joy in creation and his minute precision are evident in every word and every figure."







**K**nowledge is a treasure chest. The transmission and advancement of knowledge guarantees true freedom. Education functions as an instrument that facilitates integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system of living.

What can happen when a volcano interacts with the ocean? Why can't one see Tsunami, the monster wave that reaches the shore, when one actually flies above one? Isn't it interesting to know that the jumbo flaps of elephants actually mean 'go away' and that an elephant eats up 50 tons of its grassy environment each year? How many of us know that the average distance of earth from the sun is 93 million miles and that the entire atmosphere weighs 5,700,000,000,000 tons?

**Popular's Young Discoverer Series** by Discovery Channel seeks to satisfy the scientific curiosity of young learners. The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for the human beings to discover. **Popular's Young Discoverer Series** aims to enable the young learners to deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

As books are important in the formative years of a child's education, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, has introduced a series of books collectively called the *Young Discoverer Series*. This series, authored by Discovery Communications, Inc., are based on science and nature, which cover topics under Life Sciences, Earth Sciences and Physical Sciences.

Each book has an assortment of sections whereby information is provided categorically and in a fun filled manner. Some of the sections are *Almanac*, *Amazing But True*, *At-A-Glance*, *Careers*, *Eyewitness Account*, *Fun & Fantastic*, *Heroes*, *Map*, *Scrapbook*, *Scientist's Notebook*, *Solve-it-Yourself Mystery*, *Table*, *Picture This*, *Timeline*, *Virtual Voyage*, *Questions & Answers*, and *Your World-Your Turn*. *Solve-it-Yourself Mystery* section offers plenty of science experiments.

The specialized approach, the eye-friendly illustrations, the linear presentation of facts, the authenticity in furnishing details, the fund of information, and the simple style of narration make the books a storehouse of knowledge.

- By Anupama Natarajan



# A DOLL LIKE NISHA'S

**P**reeti was inside the house playing with her brother, Suresh, when they heard a sudden commotion outside. They both ran out and saw that Nisha's parents had returned from their Singapore trip. Colourful baggage was unloaded and taken inside their neighbour's house. The taxi was sent off and the excited voices receded.

In the evening, Nisha came over to show the gifts her parents had bought for her. Lovely dresses, blouses and skirts, a red rain-coat, beautiful plastic clips for the hair and a golden-haired doll.

Preeti duly admired all the gifts but what she fell in love with was the doll. She had never had a proper doll. All the dolls she had were hand-me-downs from her cousin from Mumbai or the stuffed dolls which her mother painstakingly made out of scraps of felt and chintz.

Preeti waited until the next evening when she complimented her mother on her 'barfis' and asked her if she could have a doll similar to Nisha's. Her mother hugged her and kissed her, but turned down the request all the same, saying it was too expensive.

Preeti was very disappointed but did not say anything. She went to the park to console herself. Her friends from the neighbourhood were there and she told them about her desire for a doll like that of Nisha.

Her friends told her that nothing would be achieved by sulking and that she should think of a way of collecting enough money to buy a doll herself. One girl suggested selling pappads but Preeti said there were a number of small boys already doing that. Another said, 'Make greeting cards at home'. But Preeti said cards sold well



only during certain seasons. Finally, they decided to put up a play and invite the people of the neighbourhood.

The children met the principal of the local school and obtained permission to use the assembly hall for their practice sessions. They chose to put up the play 'Cinderella'. They found a book in the local library and wrote out their parts and learnt them off by heart.

Preeti was assigned the lead role of Cinderella. That meant she would need a ball gown. She begged her mother for an old pink lace sari and took it and gave it to the tailor along with a cutting from a nurse's rhyme book. The ball gown, when ready, was exquisite.

The day of the drama dawned bright and clear. The show was held in the evening. There was quite a crowd from the neighbourhood—plenty of children and a few adults. They collected five rupees from the kids and ten rupees from the adults. The play went off without a hitch and there was enthusiastic applause by the children. The





next day Preeti took all her friends and treated them to a cone ice-cream each for helping her. She counted the remaining cash and found that she had nearly two hundred rupees.

That evening the whole family made a trip to the biggest toy shop in town. Preeti had never seen such a variety of dolls and toys. The salesgirl showed her a number of charming dolls in pretty dresses. Preeti finally picked out two dolls and went to ask Suresh which one she should take.

She found Suresh in a corner of the shop. All his attention was on the red fire engine he held in his hand. His eyes were full of admiration and longing. He asked the salesgirl the price and when she said, 'A hundred and ninety rupees', he quietly put it back on the counter and turned away.

Preeti quickly thrust the dolls on the counter behind her and went up to Suresh.

"Do you like the fire-engine, Suresh?" she asked.

"Yes, I love it but it is too expensive."

"Don't worry. I'll buy it for you."

Suresh's eyes sparkled with happiness.

Preeti went to her parents and told them about the change of plans. They both knew that Preeti longed for a doll like Nisha's. That she should sacrifice her desire to



buy a gift for her brother both surprised and pleased them. They decided to save money and buy her a doll like Nisha's.

- By Shanthi Dinakar



## Couple's Boat Ride

Nitin and his wife were going to Kodaikanal. Nitin's wife was very excited on the way. She was dreaming about boating in the Kodaikanal lake. Both of them went for their first boat ride. The charges were a little steep, though Nitin managed to make a bargain with a friendly boatman. He said, "I'll take you for a half hour ride. If either of you don't utter a word during the ride, I won't charge you. If either spoke even a single word, I'll charge double." "Done," said Nitin. The boatman proceeded to take both of them for a real ride. He sailed at great speed and played lots of tricks with the boat to scare them. Finally he took them back to the jetty. "You don't have to pay anything, mister," said the boatman. "It indeed requires guts to go all the way without uttering a word."

"It did," Nitin agreed, climbing out shakily "But do you know how close we came to talking when my wife was about to fall into the lake?"



# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## ACROSS THE LIBRARY

**All of you might have visited a Library to borrow a book or sit and refer some books. Here's a crossword on the library.**



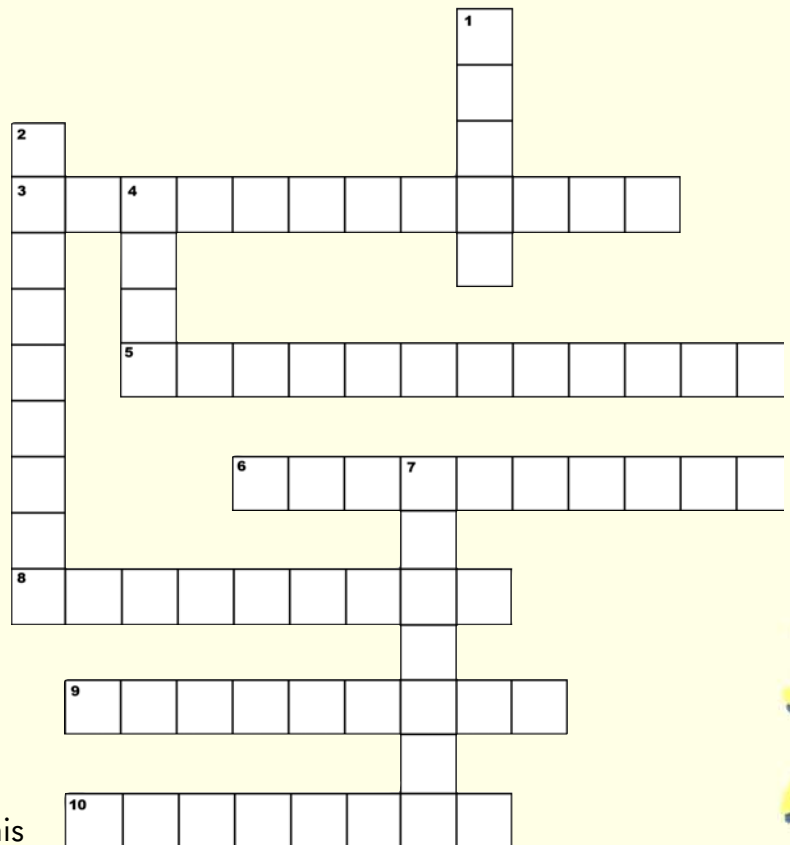
### CLUES

#### Down:

1. Shsssss.... Libraries usually work this way (5).
2. An item you may find under Periodicals (9).
4. What you need to be able to take books out (4)
7. Section for books with stories (8).

#### Across:

3. Books with facts just about anything; found in the section (see across 8) of the library (12)
5. Systems of organising books in a library (5+7).



6. Section with books on real things and facts (10).
8. Section for dictionaries and atlases (9).
9. Person in charge of the library (9).
10. One of the things you will find in the section for Periodicals (8).

**- By R Vaasugi**

**Answers:**  
 Down:  
 1. Quiet  
 2. Newspaper  
 4. Card  
 7. Fiction  
 Across:  
 3. Encyclopedia  
 5. Dewey Decimal  
 6. Nonfiction  
 8. Reference  
 9. Librarian  
 10. Magazine







# TAJ - THE MARVEL OF A MONUMENT

Once upon a time, visitors to India were urged not to miss three things - the Bengal tiger, the snake-charmer, and the Taj Mahal! This Mughal monument probably found a place in this exclusive list because the Taj Mahal is considered one of the eight wonders of the modern world.

The Taj is remembered as the mausoleum Emperor Shah Jehan built for his beloved wife, Mumtaz. He had married her even before his coronation, and she remained his constant companion. He was emperor from 1628 to 1666. When the emperor marched to the Deccan to quell a rebellion, the empress also went with him.

Shah Jehan was camping at Burhanpur when Mumtaz Mahal passed away after giving birth to her fourteenth child. The poignant story is told how the empress imagined that she heard a cry from the baby in her womb. She told the emperor, "When a child cries before its birth, the mother will not live long." She elicited a promise from her husband that he would not remarry and he would "build over me such a beautiful tomb as the world never saw".

Truly, the Taj Mahal is the most beautiful of all

mausoleums built earlier or later. It inspired poet Rabindranath Tagore to describe it as "*a teardrop on the cheek of time.*"

Mumtaz Mahal passed away in 1631. Shah Jehan was so grief-stricken that for the next two years he wore the simplest of clothes, abstained from rich food, and suspended all musical entertainments. The body of the empress was interred in a garden in Burhanpur and later taken to Agra. The coffin was laid in a temporary grave in a garden belonging to Raja Jai Singh of Amber. Shah Jehan decided that the garden by the side of River Yamuna would be an ideal resting place for Mumtaz. He bought the garden from the Raja.



Shah Jehan now began devoting most of his time in planning the mausoleum. He chose Ustad Ahmad Lahori as the chief architect. Strangely, no name is associated with the designing of this exquisite example of Mughal architecture.

However, there is a story, not so much corroborated by records or evidence, yet it begs recounting. Shah Jehan invited designs for the mausoleum. Every day, someone or another would seek his audience to show



him a design. He would take a look at it and send away the person with a bag of coins. One day, he was sitting in the Diwan-i-am (hall of public audience) in the Fort in Agra. Suddenly, he noticed an old man in a corner, with a scroll in one hand, hesitating to go forward to meet the emperor. He called an attendant and asked him to bring the man to his presence.

Shah Jehan guessed what he was holding in his hand and asked him to unfurl the sheet and show him the design. This time he looked at the design for a longer time than was usual and then raised his head and looked at the sorrow-laden face of the old man. Shah Jehan did not speak a word, but the man understood what the emperor wished to know. He told the emperor that he was a carpenter, that he had lost his wife and he was thinking of a modest tomb for her. The scroll had the design he had in mind. When he came to know that no design had pleased the emperor, he thought he would take his design to him.

Shah Jehan asked him whether he could prepare a wooden model. The man agreed, and the emperor sent him away with a heavier bag of gold coins. Many days passed and there was no sign of the carpenter. The emperor got anxious and sent two guards to search for the carpenter. The guards came back with a model that looked almost finished. But they had a sad tale to tell the emperor. The carpenter was no more. Presumably he had passed away without fulfilling his wish to build a tomb for his wife. Was it a coincidence that Shah Jehan—the master-builder—had a similar design in mind?

A Persian couplet on Shah Jehan's tomb probably gives a clue. It reads: *"The builder could not have been of this earth/ For it is evident the design*

*was given (to) him by heaven."* One can rightly guess that the inspiration for the Taj was entirely that of Shah Jehan.

Construction was started early in 1632 and it took 22 years for completion. Some 20,000 people were engaged in the construction and they came from different parts of India, like Delhi, Punjab, Orissa and the Deccan, besides Persia, Baghdad, Turkey and Afghanistan. It is said that all the mosaic workers were Hindus.

The main building stands on a marble plinth which rests on a red sandstone platform. The most attractive feature is the dome in pure white marble which is 80 ft high and 50 ft in diameter inside. The height of the monument is 243 ft. The tapering minarets in the four corners of the platform are believed to be an engineering marvel, as they are not at 90° angle, but slightly tilting outwards to prevent them from falling on the main structure. Between the entrance 900 ft away and the main structure is a waterway surrounded by gardens.

The casket containing the mortal remains of Mumtaz Mahal was kept in the middle of the central chamber. The emperor wished to construct another monument for himself on the other side of the Yamuna. However, the war with his sons forced Shah Jehan to abandon the project. When he died, his body was brought from the Fort by boat along the river and taken through the 'water gate'—which the emperor used to take when he visited the Taj every Friday till the day he was imprisoned in the Fort—and kept in a casket next to that of Mumtaz Mahal.

The Government of India has plans to celebrate the 350th anniversary of this famous monument this year.







# SAGA OF THE MOST DARING SAILOR



**T**here lived, more than 250 years ago, a good farmer and his wife. Their humble cottage built of mud stood in the little village of Marton-in-Cleveland in Yorkshire, England. On October 27, 1728 a son was born to them and they named him James Cook. He grew up into a fine, sober but obstinate boy. He attended school only till he was 12 years old and then began helping his father on the farm. In his early teens, he left home and worked for a grocer in the neighbouring hamlet by the sea.

Young James always showed unusual signs of an inquiring and able mind. He soon developed a fascination for the sea as he watched every day ships come sailing by. Often he would run away from work, go to the docks and freely mingle with the sailors. It was with awe and wonder that he heard the tales of adventure that they recounted to him. Not surprisingly, he soon began to dream. He dreamed of going to the sea and exploring the world that lay beyond the waters.

The good old sailors, of course, gave out a loud guffaw. "He dug potatoes, and he sold ribbons and reefers and gingerbread, and he wants to ship aboard the first boat out!" But little did they know that so sincere

was the yearning of this lad, so strong was his determination that he was sure to fulfil his dream and become one of the greatest navigators and explorers the world had ever known.

So it was not before long, at the age of 18, in 1746, James Cook managed to get himself a job as an apprentice in a coastal collier and sailed in the North Sea. Life was tough but that did not discourage him. He liked it and he learned fast, got a splendid training and soon became a clever sailor. Three years later, at 21, he was rated as an able seaman. He was soon promoted to higher and more responsible positions. Finally, after eight years of service, he was given the chance to command a vessel. Most working sailors would have jumped at this promising career. But not the modest young James; he had different plans.

In 1756 war broke out between England and France for the possession of Canada. Captain Cook, as he popularly came to be known, joined the Royal Navy. His tall striking appearance and his great ability as a sailor caught everyone's attention and he rapidly advanced to the position of the ship's master and then was given command of a whole vessel. He was nearly 40 when he received his first commission as an officer. He always spent his spare time to draw maps and make charts to guide ships safely through water in which they might have struck against rocks. His charts and maps of the Pacific Seas are much more than had been recorded even by twenty of his predecessors over the past 250 years. It was his minutely detailed charts of the Canadian rivers and the coastline that helped the British fleet to launch successful attacks on several French strongholds and finally win the war. There came a day in 1768 when a





highly able seaman was wanted to lead an expedition to the South Pacific Ocean. Captain Cook was the obvious choice. He was given a ship called *Endeavour* that set sail from England on August 26. His task was to visit a group of islands and observe from there the transit of planet Venus across the sun. Then he was to sail to the South Pole in search of a “great southern continent” which scientists believed must exist to balance the great land-masses of Asia in the northern hemisphere.

His men saw him as “a six-foot, robust figure, with bushy brows surmounting small, keen, brown eyes. His face was long, with high cheek bones. His straight brown hair was tied behind, as was the fashion.” The crew “found their commander a man of few, but occasionally explosive words. He had the unique distinction of finding ways, with proper hygiene and diet, to conserve the health of

the sailors and check the spread of diseases.”

One fine day, after several months, the ship reached the shores of a large island, which Captain Cook called King George’s Island after his sovereign. But its native name was Tahiti and that is the name by which it is now known. The natives came out in their canoes waving green branches as a sign of friendly greetings and warm welcome. They brought fruit and vegetables and gave them in exchange of mere iron nails. In fact the simple natives knew nothing of metal and would trade almost anything to possess this marvellous metal. For example a gift of a nail or a spike could win a sailor a beautiful girl as wife! It so happened on an earlier visit of a British ship to the island, in one month it almost sunk because the crew had removed most of the vital spikes and bolts of the vessel for trading with the local people.





The chief of the island, who wanted to show that he was a special friend, took off some of his clothes and put them on Captain Cook. But the sailors soon found that the natives would steal anything they could, in spite of their friendliness. Incidents of theft continued, the natives' hands were constantly dipping into the white men's pockets and picking up all that they could grasp. Only when they were threatened with firearms that they returned whatever they had stolen.

Once while Cook and his men were exploring the island a group of ducks suddenly flew overhead. One of the sailors fired at them and killed three birds with one shot. "This," wrote Captain Cook, "struck the natives with the utmost terror, so that most of them fell suddenly to the ground as if they had also been shot at the same discharge." But fortunately they soon recovered from their lying-down position.

An observatory was set up and the scientists and astronomers studied the movement of the Venus across the sun. The first part of the mission was now complete. It was now time to leave the island and proceed to the South Pole in search of the new continent. The *Endeavour* set sail from the island of Tahiti. As she did so, hundreds of canoes filled with loudly sobbing natives surrounded her, bidding goodbye.

Captain Cook spent more than a month sailing among a host of islands which he called Society Islands. Then he reached New Zealand and found that he could sail right round it. Thus he proved that it was not a part of a continent at all as many thought then. Instead he discovered that it was divided into two large islands.

Then he proceeded to Australia. He was the very first man to sail along the east coast of Australia and draw a map of it. For it was one of the most dangerous coasts, considered the greatest navigational hazards in the world.

Once the ship did run onto some rocks and was

nearly wrecked. But they managed to salvage it and repair the damage. Then sailing into the Indian Ocean and round South Africa, Captain Cook finally returned home to England. He had been away for almost three years and had sailed right round the world.

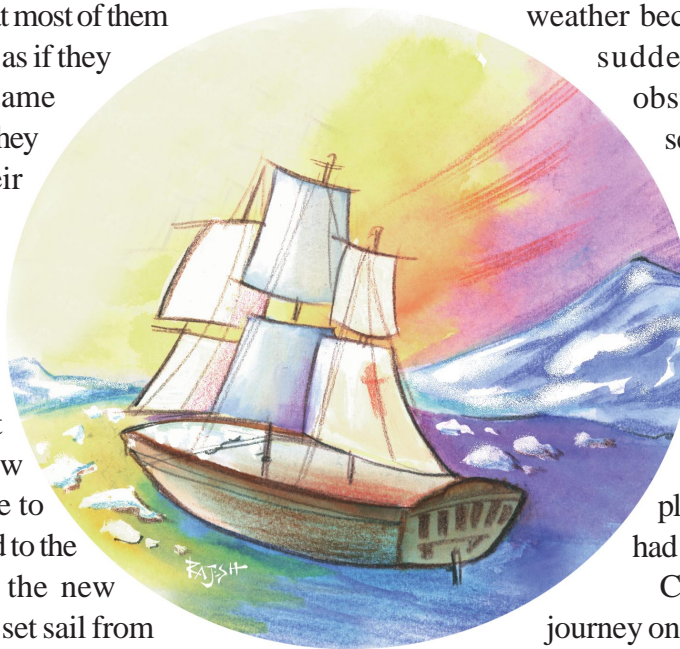
It was not before long that he was chosen leader of another important expedition to the southern seas, to look for the unknown continent that probably lay beyond New Zealand. This time Captain Cook was given two ships, *Resolution* and *Adventure*. He himself sailed in the first vessel. The voyage of discovery set off in July 1772. But not before long the ships were caught up in a terrible storm and tossed about on the turbulent waters. The

weather became colder and colder and suddenly a great mass of ice obstructed their path. Then a second gale sprang up and the ships lost sight of one another.

The captain ordered his men to fire guns and light fires as signals. But there was no response. The ship *Adventure* appeared lost. It was only on his return that Captain Cook had the pleasant surprise: The *Adventure* had reached home before him!

Captain Cook continued on his journey on the icy waters. It was so cold that icicles an inch long hung from the noses of the sailors and the ship was covered with snow and ice. There was no sign of the elusive continent that was believed to be lying somewhere on the southern tip of the earth. So Captain Cook and his men returned home, on the way discovering a host of islands small and big. In 1776 Captain Cook set out on his third voyage. Unfortunately, three years later due to a senseless quarrel over a stolen boat on the Hawaiian island, he was killed by the Polynesian natives on February, 14, 1779. His remains were committed to the deep waters of the sea that he loved so much. The guns of his ship boomed saluting one of world's bravest sailors and greatest explorers.

- By A.K.D.



## A GREEN WORLD

**V**eena is spending her vacation with her grandparents in their village home. She is fascinated by the greenery she sees all around her, something seen only in parks in the cities.

The magic of nature is revealed to Veena as she plays in her grandparents' garden. There is always ample shade provided by the trees. What fun it is to lie under the mango tree, reading a book, or better still, watching the antics of the chirping squirrels on the branches. The mangoes plucked off the tree taste so much more delicious than the ones bought from the market!

As Veena and her grandparents sit in the lawn, her grandfather asks, "So, how are you enjoying your stay in the village, Veena?"

"It's simply wonderful, Grandpa!" says Veena. "Playing in the garden is so much fun! I never saw so many trees in one place before."

"In the city, trees are being chopped down to make way for high-rise apartments. Trees are man's best friends, but he does not realise it. What a pity!"

"Why do you say that, Grandpa?" asks Veena, her interest now whetted.

"Why not? They provide fruits, wood for fuel and for making our furniture, and leaves for animal fodder. Every part of the tree is useful to man!"

"I never knew, Grandpa," admits Veena.

"Trees provide shelter from the sun – just imagine how hot a treeless street can be! Further, their roots hold down the soil, preventing soil erosion. They absorb carbon dioxide and produce life-giving oxygen. They help recharge groundwater and bring about rainfall. They provide habitat for wildlife, and add beauty and grace to any setting," adds Grandpa in one breath.

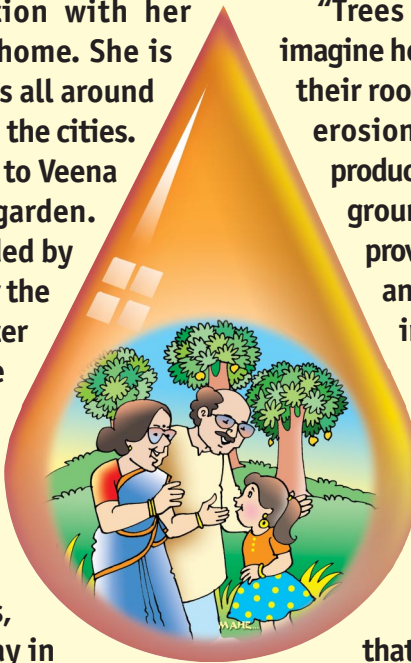
"Wow! I'd no idea that trees are so useful!" exclaims Veena.

Her grandmother joins the conversation. "My child, you must do your bit to keep the world green and beautiful."

"Grandma, tell me how I can do that," says Veena enthusiastically.

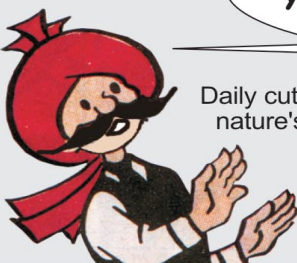
"Why, plant trees, of course!" says her grandmother. "Do you know how so many trees have come up in this garden? Your grandfather and I had planted them on various occasions. This mango tree – your favourite – was planted when your mother was born. The fig tree was planted when *you* were born. Each of these trees has a history behind it. See how tall and majestic they have all grown, and how much happiness they have brought us!"

"You're right, Grandma," says Veena. "When I go back, I shall bring a touch of greenery into the city, by planting trees on every occasion!" She seems to have learnt a very useful lesson.

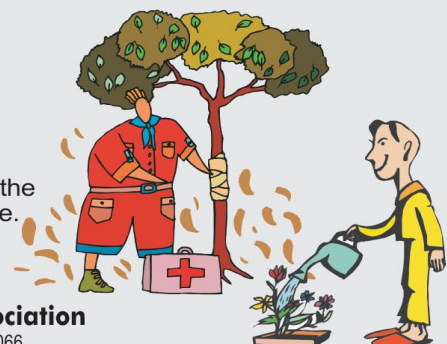


Plant trees and say proudly,  
"Yes, we did effort for you also,  
Mother Nature".

Daily cutting of trees and increasing pollution is fast disturbing the nature's balance. So, plant new trees and save Mother Nature.



**Petroleum Conservation Research Association**  
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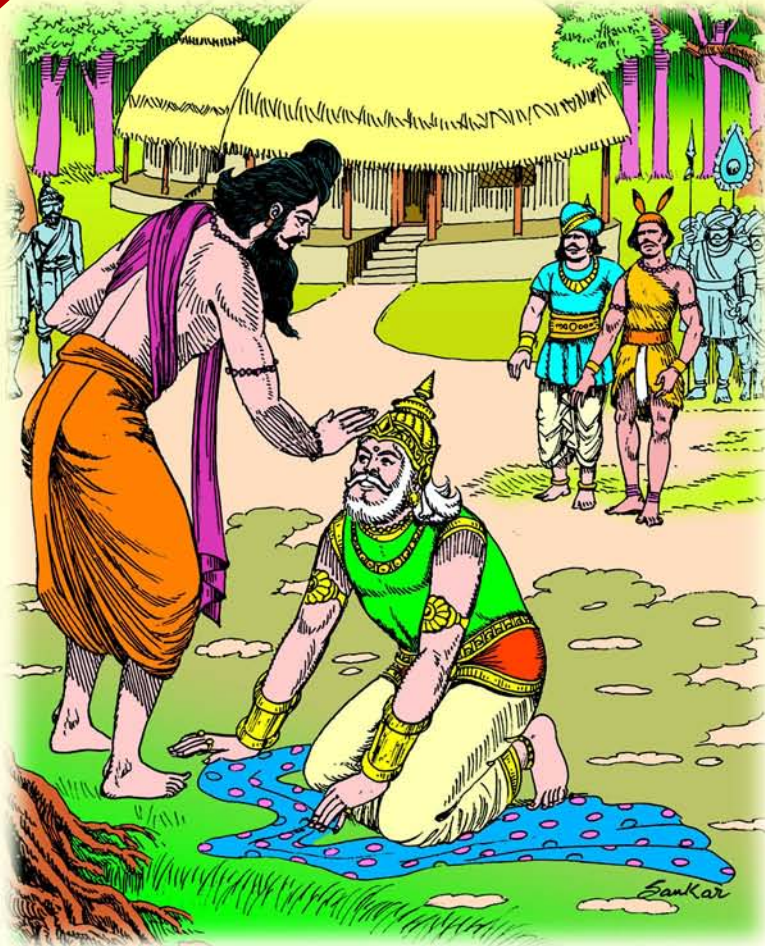


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# GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM



**A**fter the departure of Prince Sudarshan and his mother, Queen Manorama, the way was clear for Shatrujit's coronation. It took place in Ayodhya with great pomp and show. Nobody knew where Manorama and Sudarshan were. But Shatrujit's grandfather, Yudhajit, was a cautious man. He set spies to locate them. In due course it was reported to him that the prince and the queen were living in the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj.

King Yudhajit marched towards the hermitage. Queen Manorama came to know of it and was full of fear on account of her son's life. But the sage reassured her of their safety.

Coming out of his hut the sage confronted the king. "What business do you have with me?" asked the sage.

"I am looking for Queen Manorama," declared the king.

"I know why you are looking for her. She has lost her husband and her father. She is a refugee in my hermitage. Why are you so inhuman as to pursue her and her son?" asked Bharadwaj.

"I am not prepared to answer you. Let the queen and her son surrender to me. Otherwise I will take them away forcibly," replied the king.

The sage trembled with rage. "Do so if you can, you small man! Mad with your power and vanity, you are under the delusion that you can terrify everybody! Are you so much of a fool as to forget that there are far greater powers than the mundane ones?" blurted out the sage and he returned to his hut.

King Yudhajit got panicky at the sage's threat. He was in a dilemma. To let Sudarshan remain alive would mean to endanger the future of his grandson; on the other hand, to annoy the sage further might mean catastrophe for himself and his grandson.

"My lord, it would not be wise to act in haste. Prince Sudarshan is very young. He has nobody to patronise him. We need not be afraid of him. He might perish in the forest. If he ever proves a menace to our young king, we can tackle the situation then," advised his minister.

King Yudhajit fell at the sage's feet and begged to be pardoned for his rude behaviour. Then he retreated. Queen Manorama heaved a sigh of relief.

Prince Sudarshan was taught the arts by the sage. Some of the disciples of the sage were expert fighters. They taught him archery, wrestling and swordplay.

## 10. A PRINCE IN A HERMITAGE





But the prince was primarily a devotee of Mahadevi—a form of the Supreme Goddess. He prayed to Her to know the ultimate secret of the military art. One night in his dream, he received the boon from the Goddess assuring him that the secret would be revealed to him spontaneously.

The King of Kasi had a beautiful daughter named Sasikala. Sudarshan happened to hear much in her praise. It so happened that the princess, too, heard much about Sudarshan.

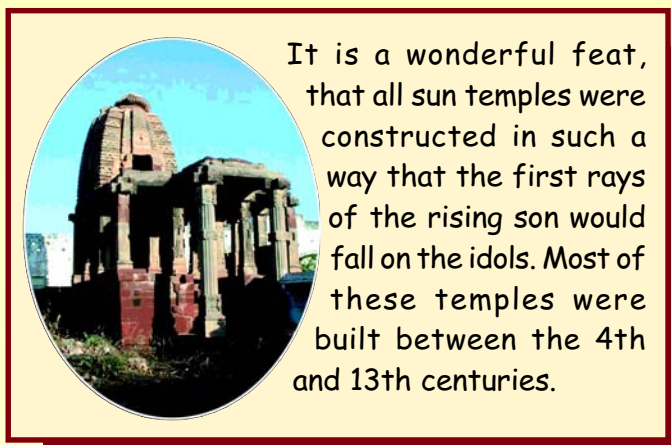
One day the tribal chieftain of Shrinagaverapur, on a visit to the forest, was so charmed by Sudarshan that he made him a gift of a handsome chariot, loaded with weapons, along with four horses.

When Sudarshan drove the chariot, he felt immensely brave. He had also a feeling that thousands of soldiers were marching with him, guarding him from all sides.

The sages visiting the ashram used to tell Queen Manorama, “Mother, your son is destined to be crowned a king!”

“O holy ones, let your prophesy come true!” the queen used to say. The King of Kasi convened a Swayamvara, an assembly of princes for his daughter’s marriage. The princess was required to choose her husband from among the princes and kings present.

When Princess Sasikala heard from her maids the names of the invitees, she shed tears and said, “In vain have these suitors come here, for I will marry none of them!”



It is a wonderful feat, that all sun temples were constructed in such a way that the first rays of the rising sun would fall on the idols. Most of these temples were built between the 4th and 13th centuries.

“Who then is your choice, O Princess?” asked the maids.

“Prince Sudarshan—living in exile in the forest,” was Sasikala’s reply.

The queen was told about the choice of the princess. In her turn, the queen reported the matter to the king. He was very unhappy. “How can I give my daughter in marriage to a prince who has been exiled and who has nothing to claim as his own? Besides, he is never safe. Today or tomorrow Shatrujit is likely to make an effort to kill him,” the king said with anguish.

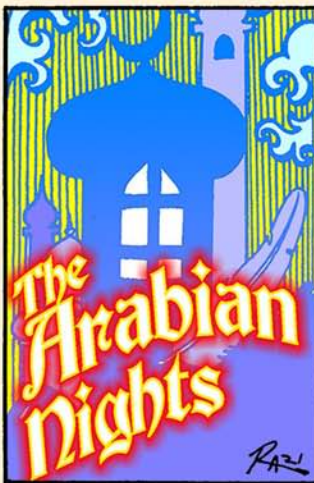
The queen ran to the princess and pleaded with her to change her mind. “The princes we have invited are gems among the eligible bridegrooms. Each one of them is an heir to a throne. Choose anyone and you would happily lead the life of a queen in the future,” said her mother. But the princess kept shedding tears in silence.

*(To continue)*





# The Arabian Nights : STOP TO THINK



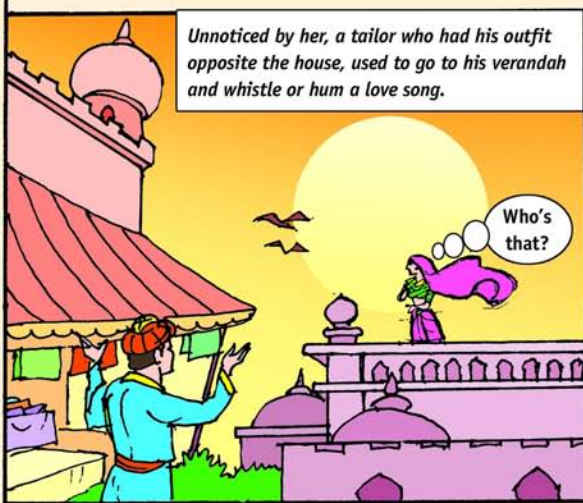
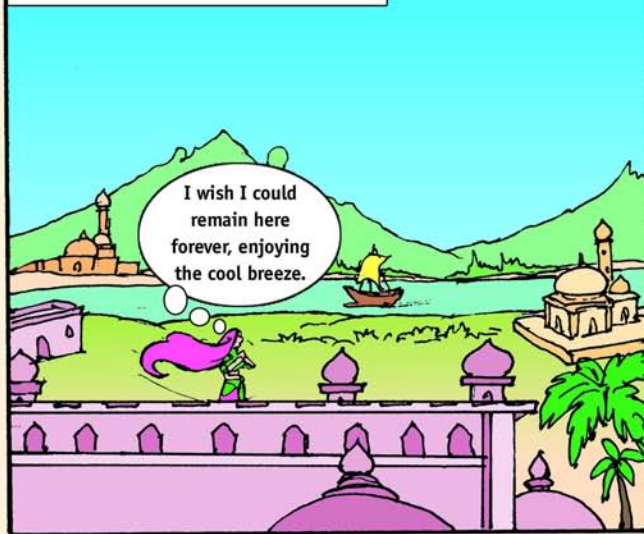
In a two-storeyed house lived a young couple. The man went for work in the morning and afternoon.



When left alone, the young woman often felt bored. She would come out on the terrace.



The terrace overlooked a valley, a quietly flowing river, and a range of hills beyond the river.

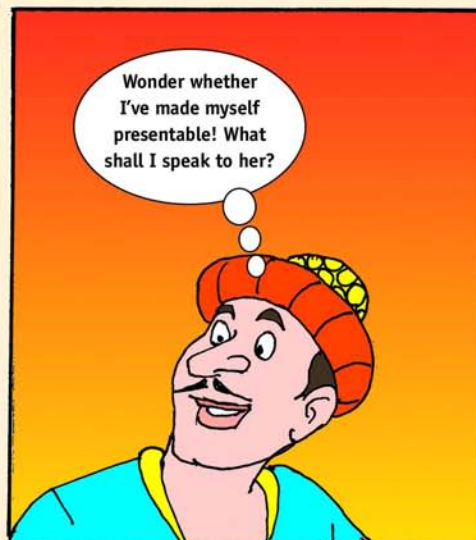


Unnoticed by her, a tailor who had his outfit opposite the house, used to go to his verandah and whistle or hum a love song.



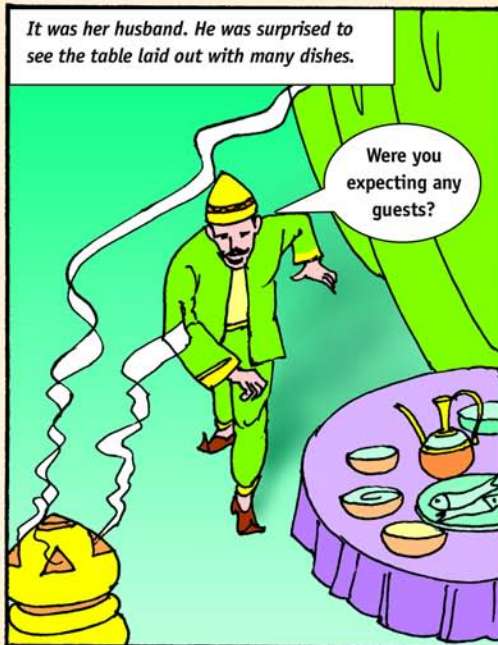


# The Arabian Nights : STOP TO THINK



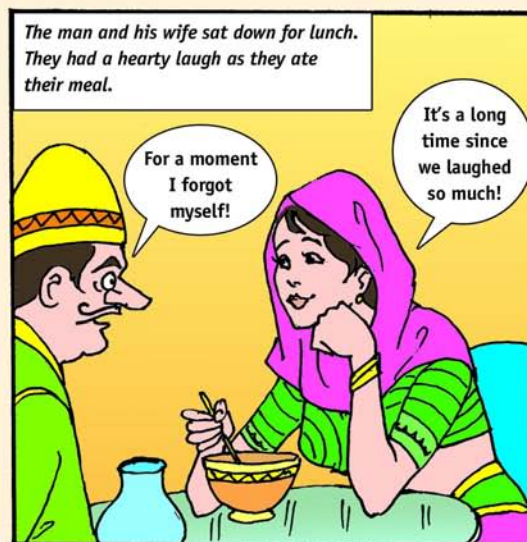


# The Arabian Nights : STOP TO THINK





# The Arabian Nights : STOP TO THINK







# 28th Olympics: Highlights



At the end of the 28th Olympic Games, the clear winner was the Greek city of Athens, which hosted the sports extravaganza. For the Games, it was a home-coming after a gap of 108 years. It was in Athens that the first of the Modern Games was held in 1896. Declaring the Games officially closed, the President of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, said: "You have won! You have won by brilliantly meeting the tough challenge of holding the Games." His statement was specially greeted by the Greek crowd in the stadium as they had reasons to feel proud of the successful way the city organised the mega event. It was a tough challenge for not only Athens and Greece, but all the sportsmen and women matching their prowess against one another. This feature takes a look at some of them who presented extraordinary performances.

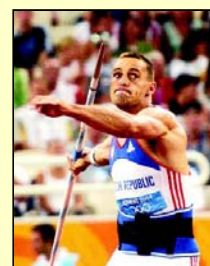
## Fastest, Highest, Strongest

### Youngest champion



Justin Gatlin of the USA not only proved that he was the fastest man in Olympics by winning the men's 100m dash in 9.85 seconds, but told the world that he is the youngest, at 22 years, to win the Games's most important crown. Maurice Greene, also of the USA, who was the favourite, was pushed to the third place with a timing of 9.87 seconds. Unseeded Francis Obikwelu of Portugal finished second by clocking 9.86 seconds. Justin's father Willie remembered how mother Janette was complaining of the baby in her womb trying to run a race, and Willie forecasting a racing champion in the making!

### World's greatest athlete



This title is normally reserved for the decathlon champion. At Athens it was Roman Serb of the Czech Republic. World record holder Roman collected 8,893 points from ten events.

### Fastest woman



By clocking 10.93 seconds, Yuliya Nesterenko of Belarus won the women's 100m gold medal. Lauryn Williams of the USA won the silver and Veronica Campbell won the bronze medal.

### Long distance running

Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia won the 10,000m gold in a new Olympic record timing of 27 min. 05.10 seconds. Bekele's world record time, set on June 8 this year at Ostrava (Czech Republic) is 26:20.31 seconds. He eclipsed Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie's 1996 Atlanta Games record of 27:07.34 seconds. Gebrselassie himself finished only at the fifth place. For 22-year-old Bekele, it was his first Olympic record.



### World's strongest man

This title was claimed by Hossein Rezazadeh of Iran, who defended his super-heavy weight Olympic weightlifting gold medal. He lifted 210 kg in the snatch, with a world record of 263.5 kg in clean and jerk. Back home he was hailed as the 'Iranian Hercules'.



A gold at last  
A gold medal had eluded Hicham El Guerrouj in the previous two Olympic Games. At Athens, the 30-year-old Moroccan proved the greatest 1,500m runner in history. His timing was 3 min. 34.18 seconds. He was the holder of four world titles and world records in both 1,500m and its equivalent the mile race. When El Guerrouj crossed the line, he was 800m ahead of the runner behind. There was no doubt that he was not the greatest.

One less than seven gold medals  
Michael Phelps of the USA swam 17 times in seven days and won 6 gold medals and eight other medals, one short of Mark Spitz's monumental Olympic haul of seven gold medals in Munich(1972). In the 200m individual medley, Phelps also created an Olympic record.



### Walking into history

It was a hat-trick for Robert Korzeniowski of Poland when he won the 50 km walk. It was his third Olympic victory in the same event, having won the gold at Sydney and Atlanta. His timing was 3 hours 38 min. 46 seconds. The silver medal went to Denis Nizhegorodov of Russia, who holds the world record. Compatriot Aleksey Voyevodin came third. Korzeniowski, announcing his retirement, said: "That was my last step as a top-class walker."



Fastest  
but not so  
fast



It was an American sweep in 200m sprint, with Shawn Crawford breasting the tape at 19.79 seconds. He was followed by Bernard Williams and the 100m champion Justin Gatlin coming third to claim a bronze.

Woman wrestler  
creates history

Irina Merleni of Ukraine is the first woman ever to win a gold in Olympic wrestling in the 48 kg freestyle. She routed Patricia Miranda of the USA in the semi-finals and Japan's Chiharu Icho in the finals. Athens introduced women's wrestling as an event for the first time.



Only world  
record

The only world record in Athens went to the credit of a woman athlete-pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva of Russia. She cleared 4.91m, which was 1 cm better than her own mark. In fact, this was her seventh world record for 2004. She was only in the bronze reckoning failing to clear 4.75m. Then she went on to raise her height, and she succeeded. Less than a couple of months ago, she had created a world record of 4.90m at London. Isinbayeva's world record in Athens was the first in Olympics since 1996 when Michael Johnson clocked 19.32 seconds in 200 metres at Atlanta.



### Drama during marathon

Stefano Baldini of Italy won the men's marathon run on 42.195 km. His timing was 2 hours 10 min. 55 seconds. For a major part of the race, he was running at the third and fourth places. When there was hardly 2 km to cover, he surged forward and went straight to the finish, unaware of what was happening behind. Vanderlei de Lima of Brazil, who was leading for a major part of the route, suddenly found himself pushed by a spectator. He extricated himself and managed to complete the race to claim the bronze medal. Meanwhile Meb Keflezighi of the USA had already come second for the silver. De Lima was later presented with the Pierre de Coubertin Medal for Sportsmanship. It was first awarded in 1964.

### Sharing world record

Nurcan Taylan of Turkey lifted 210 kg in the 48 kg category in women's weightlifting to reach the world record. She is the first Turkish woman to win a gold medal.





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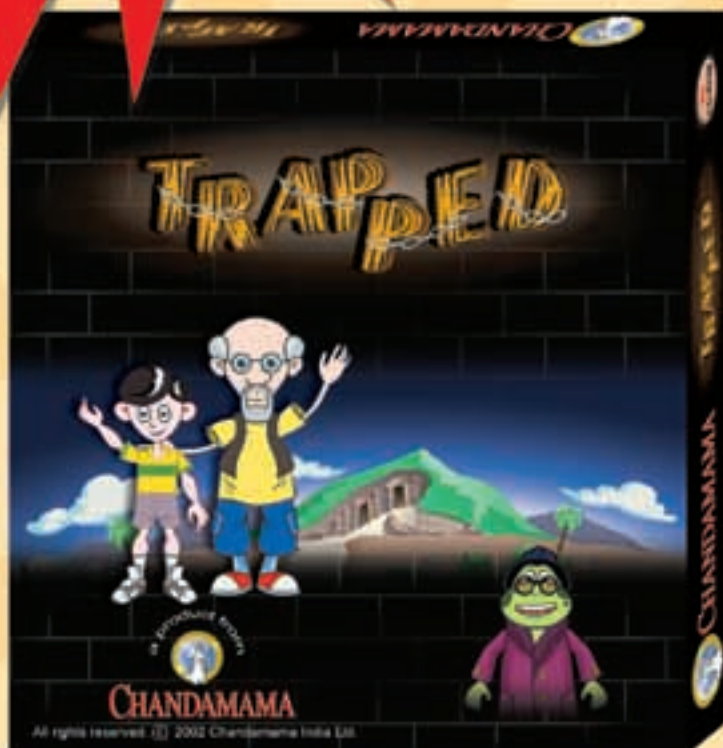




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